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This report is dedicated to the Program's first Director, Mrs. Hortense W. Gabel, to whom all of the progress and none of the problems related in the following pages are attributed.

Grateful appreciation is expressed to Harry C. Harris who succeeded Mrs. Gabel as the Director of the Neighborhood Conservation program and who was responsible for the preparation of this report during his 1962 to 1964 tenure.

*Throughout this report reference is made to the Housing and Home Finance Agency. Since the preparation of this report that agency was raised to cabinet level and designated the Department of Housing and Urban Development, with the Hon. Robert C. Weaver as The Secretary.

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Preface

THE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAM of the Housing and Redevelopment Board represents an attempt on the part of public and private agencies and community leaders to meet problems of physical and social decay in declining neighborhoods, in "grey" areas. It was launched as an experimental program by the Mayor of the City of New York in 1959 and became an integral part of the City's Housing and Redevelopment Board in 1960.

On June 2, 1960, the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency granted to the City of New York \$136,000 for a two-year period to assist it "in developing and testing techniques for the prevention of blight in neighborhoods that are not appropriate for either slum clearance or complete remodeling." One requirement of the grant was that the Neighborhood Conservation Program prepare and publish a report for the guidance of other communities. This report seeks to fulfill that mandate.. Since the Program, although formally begun in 1959, had its genesis at least four years earlier, the report covers the period from 1955 to July 1964. The pages which follow reflect observations made through that period. The actual writing and reporting were completed in March of 1965. No effort has been made to update or alter what had been spelled out to reflect the changes in program brought about by a new City Administration, as well as a new Chairman of the Housing and Redevelopment Board. It was felt that the lessons to be learned, both by those working in New York as well as in other cities across the country, from the experiences reported herein would not be augmented by changes made in retrospect.

Chelsea, Bloomingdale, East Harlem, Carnegie Hill, Morningside, Hudson and Hamilton Grange were the seven Manhattan Neighborhoods selected for the Program. In this report, emphasis has been placed on Chelsea, Bloomingdale and East Harlem since they have been in operation for at least four years and, necessarily, have contributed the greatest amount of experience upon which this analysis is built.

The overall goal of the Program is improvement of the neighborhood; the creation of a favorable physical and social environment offering opportunities for better living. In general, the following techniques have been used:

- Strict and intensive enforcement of the housing, building, health and sanitation codes through coordination of the inspectional services of City departments.
- Encouragement of building upgrading and moderate rehabilitation by advising property owners and assisting them to utilize various financing aids such as municipal loans, government-sponsored mortgages, tax abatement and exemption.
- Decongestion of the neighborhood by assisting families to relocate to better housing.
- Tenant organization, education and assistance with emphasis on self-help.
- Activities to clean up and beautify the neighborhood with community cooperation.

- Identification of community needs in health, welfare, police protection, intergroup relations, recreation and education.
- Building of community organization for citizen participation in joint efforts to expand services where needed and to plan for the future of the neighborhood.

The ultimate objective is the development of community-directed ongoing neighborhood improvement programs. Special projects to demonstrate new approaches to problems have been initiated.

The report describes the historical background of the Neighborhood Conservation Program — the conditions in each area, the problems faced and the considerable progress made in housing and social action projects, all of which contribute to the theory and practice of the physical and social renewal of urban neighborhoods. There is no question that several of the areas (e.g. Chelsea, Bloomingdale, Morningside) have been saved from becoming slums and have become desirable neighborhoods to live in. The Program has proved useful in supplementing urban renewal programs and in conserving both human and property values. At the same time, based on its experience, the report makes a series of recommendations which, if implemented, may serve to resolve the serious problems faced by the Program.

The introductory chapter of this report, “Progress, Problems and Plans”, summarizes the progress of the Program, the problems faced, the conclusions reached and enumerates recommendations for the future. PART ONE establishes the origins and growth of the Program. PART TWO details the progress and problems faced in improving the physical environment of “grey” areas. PART THREE deals with activities designed to better the social environment.

The report draws heavily on the records and reports of the Program’s district and central staff. In addition, it has utilized records of public and private agencies that have cooperated in various aspects of Conservation as well as newspapers, periodicals, government publications and census data. It is hoped that the report objectively mirrors the status, progress and problems of Neighborhood Conservation in New York City through July 1964.

October, 1966

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NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



PROGRESS, PROBLEMS AND PLANS

The Setting

New York City's Neighborhood Conservation Program was launched in the fall of 1959 as an attempt to halt and reverse housing deterioration and meet and ameliorate social problems effecting essentially sound though troubled neighborhoods. The project was designed for "grey" areas; communities which neither needed nor wanted assisted urban renewal treatment, but required housing and social improvements to redress adverse trends and promote sound family life in what could become stable and vital neighborhoods.

Between 1959 and 1961, seven Manhattan neighborhoods were chosen for the experiment: Chelsea, Bloomingdale, East Harlem, Carnegie Hill, Morning-side Hamilton-Grange and Hudson. Containing over 45,000 dwelling units housing nearly 100,000 people, the areas diverged in many respects but had a number of common characteristics and problems. All had a prevalence of high rise, rent controlled, non-owner occupied, multiple dwellings. Though varying, approximately 80 percent of the housing stock of the districts was sound, with about 15 percent classified as deteriorating and 5 percent rated as dilapidated. Essentially middle-class communities, each had a fairly new and significant proportion of low income residents, many of whom were recent in-migrants from the South or Puerto Rico.

As the fifties drew to a close, the seven neighborhoods were confronted with the deleterious effects on existing housing of age, the elements, mismanagement, neglect and economic exploitation. New construction had not been undertaken since the twenties, nor was

any planned. Responsible owners were leaving the areas and a virtual interdict existed on the granting of conventional mortgage loans for property improvement purposes. There was no systematic enforcement of housing laws; as a result, code violations were as rampant as the conversion of formerly family-centered buildings to rooming houses or single room occupancy buildings. Overcrowding was pronounced in many buildings, as was the postponement of repairs and the replacement of depreciable equipment in others. The need for extensive moderate and some major housing rehabilitation was apparent on many of the 102 blocks which were to be served by the Program. Shoddiness within the buildings was oftentimes matched by a decline in the general physical environment of the seven communities.

Police and security problems were in evidence. The relatively high traffic in vice and narcotics and the increasing incidence of anti-social or delinquent behavior was causing a sense of panic among many residents. Inter-group tensions were high, rising and were occasionally manifested in acts of violence. Health, mental health, education, social welfare and employment, consumer education, and recreational services and facilities were inadequate to meet the needs of neighborhoods undergoing rapid and pervasive change. Newcomers were not being helped to overcome the problems associated with the adjustment to a complex northern, urban society.

In the face of the physical and social decline, many middle-class families began the flight to suburbia, thereby compounding various adverse trends. Other residents and almost all neighborhood organizations and institutions were effectively immobilized in the face

of the changes, though desiring to do almost anything to reestablish what were oftentimes thought to be idyllic conditions. There was little communication between disparate neighborhood groups. Public and private agencies lacked resources to deal with the emerging problems. In addition, their fragmented efforts were not even remotely coordinated nor directed towards meaningful and realistic improvement goals.

Drawing on the experience of a number of pilot projects, the Neighborhood Conservation Program was initiated to meet these and other problems by improving neighborhoods not earmarked for assisted renewal within at least a decade. The means by which this was to be achieved was essentially that of localizing and intensifying the services of public and private agencies, and mounting a concerted, coordinated and continuing attack on housing and social problems indigenous to "grey" areas. To help assure its success, the effort was founded on the premise of citizen participation in every aspect of the venture, including the eventual creation of community-wide organizations that would hopefully sustain and build on the improvements triggered by the venture.

Starting the Program

For the Neighborhood Conservation Program to succeed, it was essential to develop an effective partnership between the City and the leaders and residents of the neighborhoods which were to be serviced by the Program. This was especially needed because of prevailing patterns of apathy and past mistrust of public and private agencies. Accordingly, organizations and institutions with deep roots in the seven communities were asked to sponsor the Program. Sponsors were charged with the tasks of employing professional staff; establishing practices and procedures for the districts, meshing these with public policies and the overall goals and methods of the Program; acting as a sounding board for neighborhood needs; and providing a vehicle for citizen participation in the total improvement effort.

Actuated by varying motives—the desire to stem physical and social blight; the need to devise an alternate approach to projects involving major demolition and mass relocation; the wish to fill gaps in neighborhood services; the opportunity to advance new housing

and social work techniques—potential sponsors approached the City to start their improvement campaigns. Hudson Guild Neighborhood House undertook the responsibility in Chelsea, as did the Morningside Community Center in Morningside, and the Community Service Society in East Harlem. In Bloomingdale, sponsorship was shared by the Master Institute of United Arts, Grosvenor Neighborhood House and United Neighborhood Houses, who formed a non-profit corporation to conduct their project. The same was true of Mt Sinai Hospital, the Church of the Heavenly Rest and St. Francis deSales Church in Carnegie Hill, and City College and Manhattanville Community Center in Hamilton-Grange. All of the multisponsored districts added community leaders to their governing bodies, which was the sole sponsorship arrangement in Hudson.

Public funds were not at first available to start and sustain the districts. To do so, the sponsoring bodies were required to raise at least \$20,000 a year for two years in order to qualify for treatment. Funds were provided by foundations, local businessmen and neighborhood residents. In addition, sponsors contributed services, materials and space for site offices. A number of ancillary projects were supported in the same manner. In order to continue the Program, grant-in-aid funds averaging \$30,000 a year have been given by the City to the sponsors as private resources have been exhausted or, in the case of Hudson and Hamilton-Grange, to actually initiate neighborhood improvement programs. In all cases, sponsors have had to supplement public funds to insure the integrity of the partnership arrangement.

Central staff services of the Neighborhood Conservation Program—which was at first an arm of the Mayor's office and then an integral part of the Housing and Redevelopment Board—were provided by the City. Between June, 1960 and May, 1962, the Program's costs were shared on a two-thirds, one-third basis by the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency and the City of New York under the terms of a Section 314 Demonstration Grant totaling \$204,000. Since then, the administrative, housing, real estate, legal, social work, planning, research and training services provided to the districts have again been borne by the City, as the project became a permanent function of government in New York City.

Beginning in 1959, the City has allocated funds to the Program for relocation purposes; undertaken capital expenditures to improve lighting and refurbish capital plant; and provided supplemental aid for public assistance families residing within the selected neighborhoods. The intensification and localization of municipal services and the special deployment of municipal personnel have also meant some added, though undermined increases in public expenditures in the seven neighborhoods.

Besides sponsorship and financial criteria, Neighborhood Conservation Districts could not be initiated unless they met objective, though at first somewhat amorphous physical and social planning standards. Each neighborhood's housing stock had to be basically sound, though deteriorating, if the Program was to meet its primary objective of conserving communities without resorting to redevelopment techniques. Simi-

larly, the social problems confronting the areas had to be serious enough to warrant the allocation of resources not normally available to similar neighborhoods, but not so serious that the added services would prove inadequate in resolving the problems. Equally important, the neighborhoods had to be self-contained entities, isolated from surrounding slum areas by natural, man-made or historical boundaries. Further, and in order to supplement the City's assisted renewal efforts, the neighborhoods had to abut on urban renewal areas, public or publicly-assisted housing developments or major institutions in order to protect the governmental investment in such facilities. Each area also had to have values which were important to conserve and the potential for a sense of neighborhood. Finally, and through sponsorship and financial arrangements, area residents had to demonstrate that they indeed wanted their neighborhoods to be improved.



One of the storefront "City Halls" used to administer the program

To administer the Program, a fairly simple device was employed. Each district opened a site office, which, in effect, became a local "city hall," from which the project was directed and coordinated by the district director and his staff, a local "mayor" and his assistants. Thereafter, personnel from the housing inspectional services were attached to the districts on a continuing basis, and employees of municipal departments concerned with other aspects of code enforcement, housing rehabilitation, relocation, and the general physical environment were called upon as needed. This was true, too, of agencies involved in security, youth and inter-group programs and the fields of health, mental health, education, welfare, employment, consumer education and recreation.

Generally acting under their regular policies, practices and procedures—but oftentimes adapting these to effectuate the special purposes of the Program—the work of the agencies was coordinated on a local basis through day-to-day staff contacts and regularly scheduled interagency meetings. Coordination of the activities of the middle and top management levels of municipal government was vested in the hands of the Program's central staff, which had access to policy level officials of City government.

Liaison procedures and other administrative arrangements were designed to gain priorities in City services, as well as expedite governmental action on a neighborhood level. Interagency relations were predicated at first on informal and then formal policy and procedural agreements. The entire Conservation process was characterized by a pragmatic approach to urban problems and the desire to use the districts as action laboratories in which to devise, test, and then apply new housing, social action, public administration and community organization techniques.

To start each district, property owners were contacted individually or in groups and apprised of their rights, responsibilities and rewards. Various media were employed to alert residents to the Program's potential significance in bettering neighborhood conditions. Similarly, private agencies, organizations and institutions were approached and asked to cooperate in the venture. Finally, all of the resources at the Program's command were initially concentrated in specific blocks and buildings and the attack on housing and social problems launched.

To do so entailed the application and enforcement of housing laws and codes governing the maintenance of existing housing; the relocation of overcrowded families; the initiation of moderate and major property rehabilitation ventures, including the utilization of various economic and managerial aids designed to achieve such ends in the most economical manner possible; and the start of measures to improve the general physical character of neighborhoods. On the social side, the Program involved efforts to improve the security of neighborhood residents, while meeting problems posed by narcotics addiction, delinquency and racial, ethnic and class tensions. The Program extended to improving ongoing or initiating new services in the fields of health, mental health, education, social welfare and employment, consumer education and recreation, and in the area of tenant assistance, education and organization. Conservation also directed its attention to securing volunteers; engendering citizen participation; and creating building, block and community organizations, thereby, hopefully, creating the framework for future, resident-direction of the Program.

Progress and Problems

Over a five year period, the Program's application and enforcement of housing codes and laws resulted in the removal of a recorded 15,000 statutory violations, thereby causing a decided improvement in the conditions of most of the deteriorating, though not deteriorated housing units in the seven Conservation Districts. Systematic inspections and reinspections achieved a level of code compliance of about 85 percent at any given time, far beyond that previously attained in the particular neighborhoods or for similarly situated areas in New York City. As would be expected, the code enforcement process had a direct and generally positive effect on the lives of residents, especially in those cases where hazardous violations were found and speedily removed. To some extent, it also helped to solve housing problems which had played an important part in the initial decline of the seven neighborhoods.

Most of the violations were removed voluntarily, especially as the Program matured and its reputation for fairness as well as severity was effectively communicated to property owners. In the minority of cases



Code enforcements spur repairs in Carnegie Hill, but did not substantially improve conditions in tenements

where the application of sanctions was required, recalcitrant, unknowledgeable or marginal landlords were prodded into complying with their legal and moral obligations and responsibilities. Adverse publicity; legal proceedings in Criminal Court, which resulted in fines eight times as high as the City-wide average; actions by the Welfare Department to withhold, and by the Rent and Rehabilitation Administration to reduce

rents; vacate orders; and the threat of receivership actions proved to be increasingly effective in gaining compliance when applied in a sustained and systematic manner. The efficacy of the penalties is indicated in part by the withdrawal of some exploitive owners from the districts and the refusal of some counsel to handle Conservation housing cases.

By localizing and coordinating the efforts of the Departments of Buildings, Health, Fire, Sanitation, and Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, residents were usually provided with more thorough, personalized, efficient and effective housing inspectional services. Interagency referrals and cooperation were speeded through special administrative arrangements and a great deal of red tape eliminated. Equally important were the improvements noted in the quantity and quality of the work of the members of the inspectional teams. Oftentimes their elan, job identification and sensitivity to problems were heightened, as was the understanding of their roles and functions by neighborhood residents. Venality was minimized through the Program's multiplicity of checks, and the resourcefulness and creativity of inspectors canalized at times into important departmental policy and procedural changes and even legislation.

Another important by-product of the inspectional process included the initiation and passage of a number of acts designed to raise the standards applicable to existing housing in New York City. This was particularly true of measures designed to prevent family occupancy in rooming houses and single room occupancy buildings; insure better maintenance practices; and provide the City with power to proceed more effectively against chronic violators of housing statutes.

On the debit side, it became clear that even the most rigorous enforcement of housing laws and codes will not bring even minimum standards of safety and decency to most old and early new law tenements. This was also true of other buildings which had been subjected to extensive deterioration either as the result of initial faults in their construction or due to the continuing impact on the buildings of exploitive owners or destructive tenants. In these cases, only moderate or major rehabilitation could bring about conditions in which code enforcement was economical, feasible and effective. Similarly, the Program's experience indicated that code enforcement must be carried out in a really

comprehensive manner on a continuing, not a sporadic or even a cyclical basis if a significant proportion of buildings are not to slip back into a deteriorating condition, a situation which was not always available even in the relatively well-served Neighborhood Conservation Districts.

Equally basic to the problem of more effective code enforcement is the need to establish higher maintenance standards to which property owners and tenants must adhere. In some cases, applicable laws and codes must specify the quality of materials used and work performed if the indicated repairs are to be lasting and not result in the almost immediate recreation of adverse conditions. Duplication of efforts and overlapping jurisdiction among the five housing inspectional departments was another situation that minimized the effectiveness of code enforcement, though, of course, maximizing waste and inefficiency in the utilization of municipal resources. Discrepancies in the attitudes, speed and level of the work of individual inspectors, and among the inspectional departments, brought varying levels of coverage and compliance to the districts. The ability of some slumlords

to hide behind technicalities to avoid prosecution; moderate fines and jail sentences levied by some justices of the Criminal Court; outmoded and inefficient departmental policies and procedures; lack of personnel; and the continuing apathy, distrustfulness and minimal expectations of some district residents stood as additional impediments to full and effective code enforcement.

Decongesting Neighborhoods

In the years covered by this report 3000 tenants were relocated from the seven Conservation Districts. Mandated by code enforcement, relocation was also in keeping with the Program's objective of reducing density, thereby helping to decongest buildings, blocks and neighborhoods. Provided with the standard services and benefit offered to all on-site families by the City, those affected by Conservation relocation were helped to make significant improvements in their housing and daily living situation. Relocation was particularly beneficial in ending conditions detrimental to sound family life in rooming houses, single-room oc-

Relocation usually brought improved housing conditions, though not better neighborhoods, for affected families.



cupancy buildings and third rate hotels where, prior to the start of the Program, large families lived in one or two small rooms, sharing bathroom and kitchen facilities with their equally crowded neighbors.

Especially through the efforts of district staff, personnel of the Departments of Relocation and Welfare, employees of the New York City Housing Authority and volunteers, the relocation process was generally characterized by an attempt to solve social and housing problems confronting the relocatees before, during and following relocation. Fairly intensive help was afforded to public assistance recipients in terms of providing material goods with which to establish new homes, and in overcoming problems related to the actual process of moving. Though not as extensive, many of the families were also extended help that allowed them to better understand and adjust to their new and oftentimes novel surroundings. The process was also of benefit in allowing a number of seemingly ineligible families to qualify for public housing. This was particularly true in Bloomingdale, where a special task force of Welfare Department personnel was able to effect rehabilitative goals and, on occasion, the reestablishment of sound family life.

As a corollary, relocation diminished the press of people on buildings and blocks and public and private facilities in the seven neighborhoods. Because of it, housing deterioration was slowed appreciably. With decongestion, remaining residents were provided with an opportunity to live better lives within and outside their buildings. In addition, social and housing problems confronting the neighborhoods were brought more in line with available, ameliorative resources.

Other benefits included a reduction in the school age population of some of the districts, with consequent improvements in the ability of educators to teach rather than "manage;" a change in the population balance which sometimes helped to spur racial, ethnic and social class integration in schools and community facilities; and an improvement in the overall physical and mental health conditions of the communities, as the spread of communicable disease was decreased and the availability of privacy promoted. Though expensive—relocation benefits to the City average about \$500 a family—neighborhood decongestion also brought about economies as a result of the ending of the dependency of some families on public assistance or because of

the rent savings to the Department of Welfare that oftentimes accompanied the movement of families to legally sound, safe and standard apartments elsewhere in the City.

Though involving less than three percent of the residents of the seven districts, relocation still had a relatively negative impact on some of the areas to the extent that it disproportionately involved minority group families and, thus, impaired the Program's goal of promoting racially and economically integrated neighborhoods. To some extent, this resulted in charges that the Program was involved in minority group clearance. Intergroup relations were further exacerbated as a result of the displacement caused by private rehabilitation efforts and a continuing pattern of segregation in most middle-income buildings. On another level, relocation involved frustrations for staff, landlords and relocatees in those cases where it preceded evictions by a few days or hours. This was especially true of cases involving large, low-income minority group families to whom the availability of standard housing continued to be seriously restricted by reason of supply and prejudice.

Though undertaken in a usually humane and efficient manner, relocation still entailed the wrenching of strong, cultural, emotional and physical ties and occasioned a journey into uncertainty and fear by the old and the very young, the infirm and recent immigrants. Remedies were not always available to allay these problems or prevent a high proportion of the relocatees from moving from poor dwelling units in increasingly good neighborhoods to good dwelling units in poor neighborhoods. Relocation also had the unexpected side effect of replacing some stable though overcrowded families with individuals or couples, many of whom demonstrated instances of personal or social disorganization that almost defied description, much less solution. Equally pernicious was the fact that a number of large families had to become dependent on public assistance because the rents of their new accommodations exceeded the amount of income they could allocate for shelter.

While social overcrowding is still pronounced in some districts, all have been successfully decongested, with the exception of the new or the expanded segments of the older districts. Even with serious problems and delays, relocation was accomplished in a

relatively short period of time and without the controversy usually associated with the forced movement of people.

Upgrading Buildings

Code enforcement and relocation brought about measurable improvements in the housing stock of most of the areas chosen for Conservation treatment. In and of themselves, they did not completely reverse the pattern of housing deterioration or promote other desirable neighborhood values. To further these ends required the initiation of a number of programs, including ones aimed at achieving moderate and major housing rehabilitation, and some redevelopment of the areas' deteriorated housing.

Repair, refurbishment and moderate rehabilitation projects were effected in over 500 buildings in the

seven districts as a direct or indirect result of the real estate advisory service which the Program offered to property owners. This free counsel—which covered such items as the best means of replacing depreciable equipment, effectuating better management practices, gaining non-structural changes, obtaining statutory rent increases, and implementing better tenant selection practices—developed into a reasonably effective means of promoting building improvements. Thus 57 percent of the property owners who were asked to make improvements costing less than \$100 and 39 percent of those who were asked to make improvements costing over \$100, acceded to the Program's requests. When coupled with the removal of code violations, the upgrading ventures made a significant difference in the conditions of buildings and blocks, though with varying degrees of success in terms of the seven neighborhoods. Whether motivated by civic pride, rivalry with



Program's real estate consultants check cornices as part of free advisory service to property owners

other landlords, the monetary values that accrue from property improvements, or simply to get the Program "off their backs," cooperating property owners provided their tenants with better housing accommodations and neighborhoods with a new sense of pride and self-identification. Most significant, the ventures were carried out with relatively little governmental aid, thereby suggesting that a majority of property owners will not only remove violations voluntarily but undertake more meaningful improvements if leadership is supplied and the effort is an integral part of an overall neighborhood improvement plan and activity.

At the outset of the Program, it was thought that the municipal loan, tax abatement and exemption programs; various F.H.A. mortgage insurance programs; low cost mortgage money provided by the State Mortgage Facilities Corporation; and the purchase and rehabilitation of properties by the non-profit Conservation, Renewal and Rehabilitation Foundation would spur moderate rehabilitation projects, help break mortgage barriers and attract responsible owners and sound equity capital to Conservation Districts. At the same time, and by reason of the cost differentials between these and conventional mortgage programs, it was thought that the improvement costs would be minimized for property owners and tenants alike.

Unfortunately, defective legislative provisions, faulty administrative procedures, or the non-applicability of the measures, the Municipal Loan and Tax Abatement and Exemption programs; the ultra conservative administration of the measure, the State Mortgage Facilities Corporation; and the newness of the aids, F.H.A. 220 mortgage insurance for non-assisted, urban renewal areas and the Renewal Foundation almost totally impaired the ability of property owners to utilize these aids to undertake needed property improvements. As a result, the property gains cited in this report were carried out through conventional means and at higher costs to tenants and property owners. In mitigation, it now appears that almost all of the above-mentioned programs can move ahead at a more rapid pace and to better advantage. If so, and in conjunction with the positive changes already effected, there appears to be every indication that most of the deteriorating though not deteriorated housing units can be eliminated from at least four of the Neighborhood Conservation Districts.

In Bloomingdale and Chelsea, a fairly significant segment of the housing stock had moved into a really deplorable state prior to the start of the Program. This was particularly true of a number of brownstone rooming houses and almost all high rise, single-room occupancy dwellings. Contrary to the Program's initial expectations and lay opinion, code enforcement, relocation and moderate rehabilitation efforts had no significant impact on the really adverse housing conditions presented by these buildings.

To reverse the pattern, the Program encouraged private and public major rehabilitation projects and two vest pocket, public housing developments. In the former case nearly 100 class "B" buildings were brought up to class "A" status, thus providing sound, self-contained though usually expensive apartments in the place of some of the worst dwelling units in the City. Signaling New York's first major breakthrough in hard core problem buildings outside of assisted renewal areas or prime residential neighborhoods, the conversions were made possible through conventional or institutional financing, though with very little participation by local financial institutions.

Rehabilitation expenditures in Chelsea and Bloomingdale caused a startling increase in the availability and velocity of mortgage loans, an almost totally unheard of possibility less than five years ago. Especially significant, too, was the fact that the improvements have brought with them increased assessed valuation of over 8.5 million dollars and increased tax revenues of over \$300,000 a year in the two neighborhoods, or almost twice the amount of the Program's yearly expenditures.

Where major rehabilitation could not be carried out by private developers, the Program turned to public authorities to achieve this particular objective. In Bloomingdale, eleven deteriorated buildings were converted to public housing at less cost and in less time than new construction would have entailed. Perhaps more important, the public rehabilitation projects were completely accepted by the predominantly middle-class residents of the community, which enabled Bloomingdale to continue its pattern of economic and racial integration and allowed the Housing Authority to create addresses rather than projects. This was true, too, of the two vest pocket projects developed in Bloomingdale and was the underlying reason for five of the

other districts' requests for public acquisition and rehabilitation of appropriate dwelling units in their areas.

The creation of new housing on appropriate vacant or underutilized land would have rounded out the Program's attempt to improve housing in Neighborhood Conservation Districts. Mitchell-Lama developments and Federally-aided housing for the aged were considered as the means of achieving this goal. High and spiraling land and construction costs in Manhattan prevented the consummation of such developments in Chelsea and Bloomingdale, and are likely to continue to frustrate similar efforts in other districts in the absence of land assembly and write down techniques or the granting of even higher tax concessions in the future. Because of these impediments, new housing in the areas has been restricted to three private and, as a consequence, expensive developments. If not carried to the illogical extreme of the creation of luxury housing on Manhattan's East Side, they will be of benefit simply as a reversal of orthodox real estate opinion about the future of the neighborhoods.

Notwithstanding failures, a significant and increasing portion of the housing in almost all districts has been substantially upgraded beyond code requirements and without the need of invoking the expensive, time consuming and oftentimes divisive process of formal physical planning.

Bettering the Neighborhood

It was essential to improve the general physical environment of "grey" areas to speed their reclamation. Neighborhood decline was in no small part attributable to inadequate street lighting; poor sanitation practices and services; the presence of refuse strewn vacant lots and the absence of greenery; the disrepair of streets and sidewalks; traffic problems; and the increasing obsolescence of community facilities. Individually relatively minor problems, taken together they contributed in no small part to the loss of important neighborhood values.

As a first step in rectifying these conditions, the Program spurred the installation of over 400 mercury vapor lamps in the seven districts. Besides providing more adequate lighting, the fixtures played a major role in improving the sense of security of neighborhood residents. Installed by the Department of Water Supply,

Gas and Electricity as an integral part of its program of relighting New York City, the lights symbolized the important role played by the Program in gaining municipal services for heretofore declining neighborhoods.

To overcome sanitation problems, the Program reached a comprehensive agreement with the Department of Sanitation. Designed to improve cleanliness within and outside of buildings, the arrangement provided at least five day a week garbage collections; daily street flushings; the provision of an adequate supply of litter baskets; extra pickups of bulk items; and the assignment to the inspectional team of sanitation patrolmen, who placed particularly troublesome buildings and blocks under surveillance and took appropriate action to insure compliance with applicable laws. To supplement this effort, ancillary projects were undertaken by district staff and residents. In Bloomingdale, sanitary education became an integral part of its park and in-building programs. Chelsea initiated campaigns in which residents cleaned and washed stoops and sidewalks. Morningside concentrated on disposing bulk items and improving the appearance of the backyards, cellars and public areas of its buildings. Other districts took analogous steps.

Coinciding with decongestion efforts, the campaign resulted in a noticeable improvement in the cleanliness of the areas and the sanitation practices of residents. Complete success was blocked at times by the redeployment of Sanitation Department personnel; changes in collection schedules; the lack of strict enforcement of parking regulations; mechanical failures in sanitation equipment; and the continuing littering predilections of New Yorkers. More basic, though, was the apparent inability of residents and officials to cope with the sanitation problems brought about by long range changes in consumer buying habits and packaging, and the failure of recent rural in-migrants to adjust to acceptable urban garbage disposal practices. Nonetheless, the districts are noticeably cleaner and contrast very favorably with neighborhoods not receiving Conservation treatment.

Vacant lots were also a problem. Especially in Carnegie Hill and Hamilton-Grange, they oftentimes resembled junk heaps. Working with block committees, the former district was instrumental in having a City-owned lot paved, graded and converted into a quiet play area for neighborhood youngsters, though

it was not successful in obtaining personnel and equipment needed to provide a really comprehensive recreational facility.

Staff and residents also worked together to acquire and plant trees in the districts. Through a generous private grant, Morningside led the way by planting \$40,000 in trees in its district and surrounding areas of Harlem. In Hudson, property owners on one block contributed over \$2,300 to plant trees. Overseen by the Parks Department, less ambitious but equally successful ventures were carried out in the other districts, notably Carnegie Hill, Bloomingdale and Chelsea. In all of the areas, aesthetic improvements of this nature were successful only after more fundamental changes had occurred in the social and physical environments.

Demonstrating that the City was itself a good housekeeper extended beyond vacant lot conversions to street and sidewalk repair projects. East Harlem, Bloomingdale and Hamilton-Grange initiated such ventures in cooperation with the Manhattan Borough President's Office. The new thoroughfares helped to improve the appearance of the neighborhoods and at times had the positive effect of spurring community participation in other aspects of the Program. Currently, the Program is working with the newly-created Department of Highways to insure similar ventures in each district. Various efforts designed to improve traffic safety and overcome traffic problems without causing a radical alteration in the basic traffic patterns of the districts have been initiated and will be extended through cooperative efforts now in effect between the Program and the Traffic Department.

Similarly, those concerned turned their attention to upgrading existing public facilities in neighborhoods undergoing Conservation treatment. In a typical approach, Chelsea worked with residents, parent groups and educators to speed the refurbishing of a public school and is cooperating in efforts to provide adequate recreational space for the district's youngsters. Morningside, Hudson, and Bloomingdale initiated projects which will result in tangible improvements in the recreational plant of the parks which adjoin their areas.

In all of the foregoing situations, the Program consciously rejected grandiose plans involving major, capital expenditures for relatively simple improvement measures designed to resolve the minor irritants that

become major neighborhood problems. As a result, there have been decided positive changes in the general physical environment of the neighborhoods and, since citizen involvement was an integral part of each action, a related improvement in their social climates.

Creating A Better Social Climate

A necessary first step in improving the social environment of Neighborhood Conservation Districts was that of resolving the security problems which had contributed in large measure to the decline of the seven neighborhoods. To do so, liaison was established between district staff and the police precincts servicing the areas. Through this arrangement police services were usually augmented in pilot blocks, at night, on weekends, in adjacent parks, during warm weather months and in other situations of special concern to neighborhood residents. Oftentimes acting as a conduit for the exchange of information between the Police Department and residents, the Program recommended and then closely followed actions designed to resolve or mitigate criminal acts or anti-social patterns of behavior.

Over a period of time, this approach was relatively successful in almost all districts. The incidence of felonies and misdemeanors was reduced appreciably and the sense of personal and neighborhood security heightened. A better rapport was established between the communities and the police. With this new climate came both a demand for better services and a more efficient and sensitive response to the demands, a causal relationship which proved detrimental only to the criminal element within Neighborhood Conservation Districts.

Problems remain, including what appears to be an above average incidence of gambling, prostitution and, surprisingly, bootlegging. As with other cooperating public agencies, lack of personnel, personnel turnover, inadequate orientation and training of personnel, and varying levels of commitments to the projects impeded the ability of the Police Department to function at the highest possible level in the districts. This was not helped by the uncooperative attitude of many district residents or the fact that the latter's standards and expectations were such that both major and minor manifestations of wrongdoing were toler-



Following hospitalization, addicts receive a battery of services at neighborhood narcotics rehabilitation center

ated. The security situation was nonetheless much improved and should continue in this direction.

Except for one district, an even better prognosis is in order for the end of the traffic in narcotics. This was brought about by the establishment of a confidential system of communications between residents, district staff and local and federal narcotics authorities; an arrangement that has allowed agencies to establish better surveillance and take appropriate action to stem the trade in addictive drugs without jeopardizing the safety of residents, the prime reason for citizen inaction in the recent past. Sensing the depth and continuity of the operation, suppliers tend to avoid most of the older and some of the new Conservation Districts.

Realizing that punitive action alone was certainly no answer to the narcotics problem, the Program worked closely with the Department of Health to initiate a neighborhood narcotics rehabilitation center that is located in one, and serves another Conservation District, as well as adjoining neighborhoods. Designed to bring diagnostic, supportive and rehabilitation services to addicts following detoxification, the center utilizes an interdisciplinary approach to the problems posed by the one thousand addicts it has served since January, 1962. Though hampered by personnel shortages, the center appears to be making significant strides in evolving techniques to reach those in need and provide them with the material and psychic resources that are thought to be required to reduce the high rate of recidivism exhibited by addicts. The experimental, sensitive and localized nature of the work of the center appears to be proving increasingly helpful to the addicts and neighborhoods serviced by it and the Program.

Relative to Manhattan in particular and the City as a whole, juvenile delinquency was a minor problem in Neighborhood Conservation Districts, though this was not necessarily perceived to be the case by residents. To help correct actual or potential patterns of delinquency, the districts took varying courses of action. Carnegie Hill, for instance, organized its youth into athletic teams, stepped up recreational services, and introduced youngsters to community facilities providing some of the answers to the educational, social and economic needs of deprived youth. Hudson and Bloomingdale worked in close cooperation with the

New York City Youth Board in bringing the latter's street work, group work, case work, and recreational services to West Side youth and their families. All districts were indirectly involved in assisting young people through housing and social action projects, though none had the ability to initiate comprehensive projects designed to provide youth with the opportunities and experience that are thought to help preclude delinquent behavior.

Racial, ethnic and class antagonisms were at the root of many of the problems facing the districts at the start of the project. By giving better security, redressing some of the housing and social problems confronting minority group families and involving all residents in various aspects of the Program and neighborhood life, initial tensions were largely dissipated and channels of communications opened between neighborhood groups. Although relocation both intensified and reduced internecine frictions, other aspects of the Program had the beneficial result of improving school integration, speeding assimilation and increasing participation in community projects by majority and minority residents alike. In contrast, was the persistence of residential segregation and a far-reaching cultural and leadership lag between middle-income whites and

Negroes and low-income Negroes and Puerto Ricans. Nonetheless, the Program helped to raise intergroup relations to a level where a systematic attack can be launched on all instances of prejudice, discrimination and *de facto* segregation.

Meeting Social Welfare Needs

Almost by definition, the seven "grey" areas under consideration had not been confronted by serious social welfare problems until the very recent past. With a changing population in changing neighborhoods, problems in the fields of health, mental health, education, welfare, employment, consumer education and recreation came to the fore but, in almost all cases, related services and facilities were either not present, lagged behind needs, or had to be recast to meet newly emerging and complex problems. In each district, the Program sought to meet these problems by intensifying old and initiating new social services. In each case, too, the approach involved a wide degree of local autonomy and a sense of experimentation, in keeping with the basic objective of the Program and the resources at its command.

Three districts became deeply involved in efforts

Carnegie Hill sought to prevent delinquency by organizing athletic events for district youth



to solve community health problems. Chelsea, in cooperation with the local Department of Health Center, initiated a campaign to motivate residents to take advantage of available neighborhood health services, with results that were of benefit to the whole neighborhood. East Harlem, through the active cooperation of its local health center, shared in a referral and diagnostic service for elderly residents, a project that not only helped to resolve health problems of individuals but uncovered some of the cultural patterns inhibiting the use of public health services and facilities and led to the initiation of special geriatric services in a number of public housing developments. In still another direction, Bloomingdale utilized New York University graduate public health nurses to interview, diagnose and refer for medical treatment residents of buildings that were undergoing inspectional treatment. This demonstration provided an advanced training experience for the nurses; helped to decrease the incidence of ill health in the area; expedited services for those in need; and gave testimony to the soundness of an interdisciplinary approach to housing, health and social welfare problems.

Hudson, confronted with a shocking concentration of unserved, recent discharges from state mental institutions in three buildings on one of its blocks, brought together and then coordinated public and private after-care and supportive services for the group. Because of the effort, referral policies were altered to minimize the pattern of concentration and those in need provided with specialized recreational, vocational and case and group work services. Neighborhood concern was abated and a better adjustment realized by those taking advantage of the services, facilities for which were made available by neighborhood property owners. Subsequently, the project was extended to other affected residents of Hudson and the adjoining Bloomingdale District, both of whom are also cooperating in a project designed to bring services to pre-skid-row alcoholics on Manhattan's West Side.

Though not as extensive, projects in the field of education were of importance to youngsters, parents, educators and neighborhood residents. Hamilton-Grange and Carnegie Hill started neighborhood study clubs, quiet facilities in which youngsters could study and do their homework under the direction of trained and volunteer staff. The impact of the study clubs on

the educational attainments of youth is being researched for possible use in other neighborhoods. East Harlem, in cooperation with the Board of Education, introduced Conservation into the social studies curriculum of two schools servicing its district. Here, the objective was to educate youngsters about the Program, available public and private services, and the neighborhoods in which they live. This was accomplished through readings, lectures, discussions, field trips and the active participation in the teaching process by municipal personnel and district staff. It proved of value in alerting parents to the Program and may be one of the Conservation projects that will have City-wide significance and applicability.

While special educational projects, relocation and intergroup relations efforts have been valuable in improving some of the districts, it is equally true that the fundamental challenges of providing excellence in education and linking the schools and the communities closer together have not been resolved in Neighborhood Conservation Districts. Since meeting both challenges is essential to neighborhood betterment, they represent key objectives in future plans for the areas by the Program and the Board of Education.

The entire range of social welfare problems came to the forefront in most Conservation Districts with an increase of low and marginal income residents. To begin to meet situations caused by dependency, despondency, and discrimination, public assistance caseloads were consolidated and, in the case of Hudson, reduced by the Department of Welfare. This arrangement, in conjunction with attendance by departmental personnel at interagency meetings, allowed plans to be developed to bring better services to those in need. In Chelsea, as an example, the local welfare center received the aid of a private social work agency in evaluating case materials, after which measures were initiated to better realize rehabilitative goals. Also in Chelsea, public and private welfare agencies cooperated in an action survey of housing and social problems confronting marginal income families. The ensuing services were coordinated to avoid duplication in the work of the agencies, while the project as a whole allowed the parties to better assess the community's social welfare problems and plan and take steps to solve adverse situations.

In other districts, there was close cooperation be-

tween district staff and welfare personnel. In many cases, this resulted in the provision of better services and material goods, and a more sensitive approach to public assistance recipients. Referrals within and outside of the Welfare Department, and from district staff to cooperating private agencies allowed a number of families and individuals to receive the specialized assistance needed to end or reduce dependency. Short term casework provided by East Harlem social workers was particularly helpful in abetting the work of the Welfare Department and resolving health and welfare problems confronting that neighborhood.

These and other activities were helpful but in no way adequate in meeting the districts' social welfare problems. Simply, neither public nor private agencies have even the minimum level of resources, or recourse to effective techniques to help multi-problem families. Personnel problems, rigidities in methods and goals, inadequate training and orientation, and a gross inability to deal with individuals affected by the culture of poverty were among the many factors inhibiting the effectiveness of social work in the districts. At best, a better description of the magnitude and complexity of social welfare problems in changing areas was provided by the Program and a small though significant dent made in the pattern.

Towards the close of the period covered by this report, various Conservation Districts addressed themselves to employment, and consumer education and protection problems. Utilizing the neighborhood based, interagency, multi-disciplinary approach of Conservation, special projects in these fields were designed and executed to gain improvements in the economic environment, thus complementing the Program's physical and social upgrading efforts.

Almost all districts were able to improve or upgrade public and private indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, obtain better equipment and services and motivate residents to use the resources to better advantage. This was particularly true of Bloomingdale, where an unsafe, underutilized and neglected park facility was refurbished and began to serve as the focal point of the community's renaissance. Through the efforts of the Park Department, cooperating public and private agencies and residents, a program was started that involved hundreds of youngsters and their parents in meaningful education, recreational, intergroup, and

parent-child ventures. Out of this process came a plan for the creation of one of the most advanced recreational complexes in the nation; a center that will not only provide residents with a superb physical setting but demonstrate that neighborhoods can be brought far beyond their former "idyllic" state.

Assisting, Educating and Organizing Tenants

A major role of Conservation staff was that of coordinating services in order to bring more effective, efficient and humane government to "grey" areas. Bridging the gap between the decline of the old line political club and the rise of the centralized bureaucracy also required direct action to help recent in-migrants and other disadvantaged families resolve critical housing and social problems.

Faced with extensive apathy, mistrust of government and a lack of leadership in most target buildings, district staff rejected middle-class premises and formal community organization methods in initiating programs to assist, educate and organize tenants. To do so, staff and volunteers utilized interview schedules to uncover problems and indigenous leaders, usually on a door-to-door, floor-to-floor, building-by-building basis. Following initial contacts, an effort was undertaken to resolve outstanding housing problems through inspectional and building upgrading projects, and social problems through case and group work techniques. Once confidence was gained, embryonic organizations were started through what was to be known as the "in-building" service. Nurtured by staff, the organizations were asked to help resolve problems affecting their building, block, and, finally, neighborhood. Over time, the campaign oftentimes resulted in motivating residents to raise their expectations; demand better services from property owners and public authorities; improve their own sanitation and housekeeping practices; take advantage of community facilities; and better understand and become more involved in various aspects of neighborhood life.

Slow in developing, the projects were oftentimes inhibited by personnel shortages, population mobility, lags in code enforcement, and the failure of staff and volunteers to bridge cultural and economic barriers. Because of the latter factor, the Program has been

working with the Community Psychiatric Division of St. Luke's Hospital on the special problems posed by deviant groups, as well as to develop more effective analytical and remedial techniques in this forerunner to an urban extension service. Though with varying effectiveness among the districts, a nexus of relationship has been laid in almost all to resolve building problems and invite greater citizen participation in the larger community.

Building the Neighborhood

Building organizations are being developed in each neighborhood and linked into block and neighborhood associations. Chelsea, Morningside and Bloomingdale have now developed to a point where associations of residents are now operating with increasing effective-

ness over a wide range of neighborhood problems; other districts are taking similar steps.

Paralleling this activity, citizen participation has been built into almost every aspect of the Program through volunteer activities, including the work of contingents of Peace Corpsmen who were assigned to the districts on three separate occasions. Equally important has been the direction of the districts by leadership elements operating through the sponsoring bodies. Steering committees have given direction to staff over a wide range of policy and procedural matters and actually became involved in the execution of some of the projects. Given a wide latitude in authority and responsibility, the groups have in some cases exercised powers which are generally the province of public officials. As their knowledge has grown and the neighborhoods improved, the steering committees have been

A neighborhood 'study' club in Carnegie Hill provides youngsters with a quiet facility to do their homework



strengthened by indigenous leaders and should become the vehicles for rank and file participation in the future direction of each area's Neighborhood Conservation Program.

Prognosis and Plans

Based upon the degree of code compliance, lack of overcrowding, extent of moderate and major housing rehabilitation, improvements in the general physical environment and social climate, the efficacy of projects designed to meet social welfare needs, and the degree of resident participation in the reclamation process, it is clear that the Neighborhood Conservation Program has been successful in Chelsea, Bloomingdale and Morningside. In a relatively short period of time, the three neighborhoods have not only been saved from becoming all out slum areas, but are in many ways better neighborhoods than at almost any point in their recent past. Given the impetus for additional positive change that is present in these areas, it is highly likely that remaining housing and other problems can be solved and the areas assume their rightful place as vigorous neighborhoods in a vigorous city.

To this end, Chelsea, Bloomingdale and Morningside will be continued as Neighborhood Conservation Districts, with decreasing resources, until such time as indigenous community-wide organizations are capable of taking over the function of professional staff.

Because of its size, the success of its effort, and its position as a buffer to the West Side Urban Renewal Area, it is not possible at this time to make a judgment about the success of the Program in Hudson. Based on the essential soundness of the area, coupled with the housing and social improvements that have already taken place, it appears that Hudson will also succeed as a Neighborhood Conservation District.

Due mainly to the extent of housing blight, the presence of a significant number of old and early new law tenements and the inability of the Program to command sufficient resources or suitable techniques to meet the housing and social problems posed by these conditions, East Harlem, Carnegie Hill and Hamilton-Grange have not succeeded as Neighborhood Conservation Districts. Recognizing this, the three neighborhoods will be converted to Area Services Projects to help insure the continuation of various positive devel-

opments, pending their ultimate designation as assisted urban renewal areas with an emphasis on conservation and rehabilitation.

Even more important than the progress of individual districts is the indicated success of the Conservation process. Enforcing codes, relocating overcrowded families, upgrading buildings; improving the general physical environment; bettering the social climate; meeting health, educational, welfare, employment, consumer education and recreational needs; assisting, educating and organizing tenants and building neighborhood-wide organizations are each in themselves valuable techniques which can be used to resolve critical housing and social problems and help create viable neighborhoods. Taken together, these devices can save neighborhoods which have not passed the highly subjective fail safe point of urban decay.

The implication of this to New York City's and the nation's urban renewal programs is both obvious and far-reaching. While Neighborhood Conservation should never be used to supplant, it should be used to supplement formal urban renewal programs. It can be utilized to save essentially sound though troubled neighborhoods, thereby postponing redevelopment for more than a decade and making renewal far less extensive and expensive at that time than would be the case in the absence of the Program. The human values that can be saved through application of the Program's techniques in appropriate neighborhoods is incalculable, as are the monetary savings. Moreover, this can be done not only with a relatively small expenditure but at an actual profit to the City.

Perhaps even more important, Neighborhood Conservation has documented the need as well as the wisdom of localizing municipal services. Clearly, the intensification and coordination of the efforts of public and private agencies has brought residents and officials closer together; canalized previous discontent into productive and meaningful activities; and provided neighborhoods with much more effective, efficient and humane government.

Economically feasible, politically attractive and socially sound, New York City's Neighborhood Conservation Program should be continued and systematically extended to every neighborhood in the City where the application of its techniques are justified on objective grounds; this, in spite of the very real prob-

lems faced by the Program, almost all of which can be resolved by the initiation of the following measures:

- A reaffirmation by cooperating public and private agencies of their commitments to the Program and a related drive on their part to resolve the obstacles related in part in this report.
- A definitive analysis should be initiated of the entire range of policies, procedures and practices of the five housing inspectional departments. On the basis of the analysis, overlapping and conflicting functions of the department should be eliminated; inspectional personnel redeployed to better advantage; and consolidation of the inspectional services started. Similarly, relevant laws and codes should be reviewed and revised to promote the highest possible housing standards. In this connection, the Program's experience should be utilized, and the districts serve as field laboratories in the City Administrator's-Columbia University recently announced study of the housing inspectional services.
- Materials developed by the Program through its inspectional, code enforcement, real estate management and housing rehabilitation programs should be analyzed through electronic data processing systems to provide better insights into the factors promoting or inhibiting housing deterioration. This information should then be utilized by the Program, the housing inspectional departments, and related agencies to better effectuate property improvements in the districts and throughout the City.
- The Administrator and Justices of the Criminal Court should review procedures in housing cases to more effectively expedite trial and appellate work and eliminate the ability of some recalcitrant property owners to frustrate rigorous code enforcement. Priorities in the application of current criminal and economic sanctions should continue to be given to the Program by cooperating agencies, particularly the Penalties Division of the Office of the Corporation Counsel. Special attention should be given to strengthening the processing of violations within the departments; the more effective utilization of receivership and vacate actions; as well as the economic sanctions at the disposal of the Welfare Department and the Rent and Rehabilitation Administration.
- Even if all these changes are effectuated, there are simply not enough resources at the disposal of the Program to carry out its code enforcement responsibilities in a prompt manner. The use of crash inspection teams, operating under rigid administrative controls, should be promoted. Beyond this, volunteers should be trained to inspect buildings and help spur compliance.
- The Social Planning Bureau of the Department of Relocation should be augmented and strengthened to provide comprehensive case work, group work and supportive services to Neighborhood Conservation relocatees before, during and following relocation. Generally, following the pattern established in Bloomingdale by the Department of Welfare's special family consultation unit, these services should be coordinated closely with those offered by sending and receiving Welfare centers and involve a high degree of mobility on the part of the assigned personnel.
- The Central Vacancy Bureau of the Department of Relocation should be strengthened and provisions made for it to vary finders fee payments in order to attract better housing accommodations for relocatees. Similarly, self-relocation payments should be graduated to promote relocation to desirable neighborhoods in all boroughs. Where feasible, the Department of Relocation should certify sub-neighborhoods as being eligible or ineligible for relocation.
- The supply of public housing units for large, low-income families should be increased as quickly as possible. Through its social consultation unit, the Housing Authority should continue to take a flexible position in its admission policies for Conservation relocatees and the Department of Welfare provide an even higher level of material goods and services for public assistance families who must be relocated. Public and private intergroup agencies should step up their activities designed to promote open occupancy housing in New York City.
- Consideration should be given to a revision of occupancy standards so that socially overcrowded families can receive relocation services and benefits in Conservation Districts. Rather than placing large, marginal income families on supplemental public assistance, they should be considered housing indigent and aided through rent subsidies, in the form of rent certificates, in their new apartments.
- The real estate advisory service of the Program should be expanded by providing owners with cost

estimates at alternative levels of moderate rehabilitation. The work of the services should be analyzed and positive aspects of its counsel communicated in a better manner to property owners. An attempt should be made by the Program to provide counsel on architectural and mortgage financing problems.

- Principals and officers of the financial institutions serving Conservation Districts should be apprised of the Program's efforts and asked to participate more closely in building upgrading ventures. If conventional mortgage barriers are not broken voluntarily, corrective action should be taken at the highest levels of banking and government.
- The municipal loan and tax abatement and exemption programs should be made more effective through necessary amendments and changes in administrative procedures. Knowledge of the available benefits should be communicated more widely to district property owners, who should receive the highest priorities in the processing of applications. The Program, the Federal Housing Administration, the State Mortgage Facilities Corporation and the Conservation, Renewal and Rehabilitation Foundation should redouble their efforts to bring other rehabilitation aids to qualified Conservation owners. The Rent and Rehabilitation Administration should further expedite appropriate rent actions in Conservation Districts and the Housing and Redevelopment Board explore the possibility of using Mitchell-Lama funds for rehabilitation and redevelopment projects within the districts.
- The Housing Authority should expand its policy of acquiring and rehabilitating suitable single-room occupancy buildings, rooming houses and old law tenements in Conservation Districts. To further this objective, State and Federal agencies should review and, where warranted, revise applicable policies, procedures and cost formulae.
- The Department of Sanitation should design a light, quiet and colorful garbage receptacle that will meet changing consumer buying and packaging patterns, after which the receptacles should be tested in Conservation Districts. The Program should intensify its sanitary education programs. Pending consolidation of the inspectional services, Health Department sanitarians should also issue violations now handled by Sanitation patrolmen. Both should undertake surveillance of insanitary

conditions in Conservation Districts at night and on weekends.

- The Department of Highways should continue to systematically repair and resurface eroded streets and sidewalks in the districts. Similarly, the Department of Traffic should continue to ameliorate traffic problems in the neighborhoods.
- Tree planting should continue to be encouraged by the Program and the possibility of significant tax exemption for these and other cosmetic improvements explored by appropriate municipal officials.
- Priorities in capital expenditures for the refurbishment of schools, playgrounds and other community facilities should be given to the districts by the City Planning Commission.
- The Police Department should inaugurate its community relations program in all precincts covering Neighborhood Conservation Districts. Liaison between the Program and Department should be stepped up and commands brought to full strength.
- The Department of Health should initiate neighborhood, narcotics rehabilitation centers in appropriate communities and strengthen the staffing pattern and services of the present center.
- Neighborhood Conservation Districts should be utilized by public and private intergroup relations agencies to promote housing and educational integration; further reduce tensions; and cultivate indigenous minority group leaders to take a more active part in neighborhood improvement ventures.
- Program designed to improve the health of district residents should be continued and expanded. Particular emphasis should be placed on the initiation of preventive services, as well as neighborhood diagnostic and treatment facilities in the field of mental health, giving particular emphasis to the development of neighborhood-based, alcoholic treatment programs. This should involve the Community Mental Health Board, local centers of the Department of Health and Aftercare Division of the State Department of Mental Hygiene, the Department of Welfare and cooperating private social agencies.
- The Board of Education should take all possible measures to improve the physical plant of schools in the districts and surmount problems related to utilization, integration, staff shortages, personnel turnover, the level of the curriculum, the quality of instruction and the provision of guidance and

other specialized services. In effect, public schools in Conservation Districts should become models of the City's educational system, thereby helping to obviate educational problems confronting both middle and low-income residents.

- Welfare caseloads in Conservation Districts should be consolidated and reduced to manageable proportions. Professionalization of the Department should be given precedence in welfare centers serving the areas and emphasis placed on the rehabilitative goals of the Department. Specialized case units should be formed to deal with the problems posed by multi-problem families, and unattached alcoholics, narcotics addicts and emotionally and physically handicapped public assistance recipients. Departmental policies and procedures should be reviewed to allow Welfare personnel to better serve residents, particularly during the relocation process; in the provision of material goods and supportive services; and through inter and intra-agency referrals for specialized services.
- Private social welfare agencies should expand their services to marginal income families and reevaluate trends toward centralization and the granting of priorities in services to well motivated individuals and families. At the same time, schools of social work and public and private agencies should re-examine basic social welfare concepts and techniques to better meet the problems confronting isolated and alienated low-income, culturally deprived, multi-problem families and individuals.
- The Program should initiate a comprehensive attack on the problems of unemployment, underemployment and poverty on a neighborhood basis, by coordinating the resources and services of the New York State Department of Labor and its specialized services; the City Department of Labor; State, City and private intergroup relations agencies; the Department of Welfare; the Board of Education and other organizations and agencies involved in the field of employment. Similarly it should become involved in the resolution of consumer frauds and in the initiation of consumer education projects through active cooperation with the Departments of Markets, Health and Licenses. Conservation and Area Services Districts should be utilized as an integral part of the administration of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.
- The Parks Department and other public and private

agencies involved in the field of recreation should continue to give priorities to residents of Conservation Districts through increased capital and expense budget expenditures, and use the areas to plan, devise and test new recreational equipment, concepts and services.

- The Program should expand its tenant education, assistance and organization efforts. This can be furthered by a more extensive use of carefully selected and well trained volunteers and by the application of the concepts and techniques of cultural anthropology, social psychology, the sociology of race and class, as well as social work methods.
- To supplement the work of staff, VISTA volunteers should be assigned to the Program. Properly supervised, they will allow the program to function more effectively at night and on weekends and in the areas of relocation, code enforcement, tenant assistance, education and organization, and community organization.
- Besides neighborhood volunteers, the Program should attract the specialized talents of concerned individuals throughout the City. Particular stress should be placed on involving retired individuals with backgrounds in housing, social action and community organization, and the faculty and student body of the public and private institutions of higher learning in the metropolitan area, who can be extremely valuable in executing action-research projects. The Neighborhood Conservation Program should stand as the vehicle for all who would serve their City by doing, not deploring.
- The Program should spur an even more representative membership on district steering committees, drawing particularly on the indigenous leadership of building and block organizations. Subcommittees of these policy bodies should be formed on a functional basis to provide residents with expertise in each area of the Program's responsibilities, thereby allowing the transition to resident-directed Conservation to be effected much more quickly and efficiently.
- The Program, while rationalizing its policies, practices and procedures, should remain flexible, creative and sensitive, and resist all trends towards its own bureaucratization. It should continue to attract generalists rather than specialists, all of whom should be dedicated and imaginative and have the ability to work in crisis situations and with a wide range of people. The Program can be



East Harlem students study "conservation" as an integral part of their Social Studies Course

made more effective by the immediate implementation of the recent Brookings Institute recommendations concerning budget and personnel practices in New York City government, and through the systematic orientation and training in Conservation policies and practices of personnel of cooperating public and private agencies.

- Future Neighborhood Conservation Districts should be chosen as an integral part of the City's urban

renewal program, based upon the experience cited in this report and criteria which clearly define potential districts as those areas in the City which have both the objective and subjective ability to be renewed through Neighborhood Conservation. The Housing and Home Finance Agency and the State of New York should begin to share the cost of non-assisted projects with New York City on a two-thirds, one-sixth, one-sixth basis.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAM *represents an attempt on the part of public and private agencies and community leaders to meet problems of physical and social decay in essentially sound though troubled neighborhoods. PART ONE of this report depicts the adverse changes that were taking place in seven areas of Manhattan as the fifties drew to a close. It poses the problems which confronted their residents and the City and describes the concept which was formulated to create viable neighborhoods. It details the efforts which were then undertaken to translate the Neighborhood Conservation concept into an action program.*

Since no program develops in a vacuum, PART ONE deals with the historical and functional roots of Neighborhood Conservation both as a city-wide and neighborhood phenomenon. It also attempts to relate the project to the broader context of New York City's housing and urban renewal programs and the administration of municipal government.



The Setting

Chapter 1 **THE PROBLEM**

- ☐ *Introduction* ☐ *“Grey” Areas • CHELSEA • BLOOMINGDALE • HUDSON • EAST HARLEM • CARNEGIE HILL • MORNINGSIDE • HAMILTON-GRANGE*
- ☐ *“Grey” Areas — The Problem*

Chapter 2 **FORMULATING A SOLUTION**

- ☐ *Introduction* ☐ *Community Participation* ☐ *The New California Hotel*
- ☐ *The West 27th Street Project* ☐ *A Rent Commission Study*
- ☐ *Developing the Concept*

Chapter 3 **STARTING THE PROGRAM**

- ☐ *Introduction* ☐ *Sponsoring the Program* ☐ *Financing the Program*
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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

New York City, as befits its stature, has been engaged in the nation's most ambitious housing and urban renewal program. Between 1950 and 1960, 419,063 new or rehabilitated housing units were created in the five boroughs. Discounting residential units lost by demolition and conversions, New York experienced a net gain of 274,231 dwelling places. As a result, almost 950,000 New Yorkers—or nearly the equivalent of the entire population of Baltimore, Maryland—gained new or rehabilitated housing accommodations during the decade.¹

In creating additional housing for its residents, New York City has undertaken a variety of programs. By the end of 1960, the New York City Housing Authority was operating 92 public housing projects containing a total of 110,000 apartments sheltering a population exceeding that of all but 29 cities in the United States. At the present time, the Housing Authority is operating, has under construction, or in planning stages additional projects which will add approximately 50,000 low rent housing units to the City's supply and provide safe, sanitary and standard apartments for an additional 165,000 individuals, many of whose incomes place them below or just above the currently acceptable definition of poverty.²

Publicly-aided housing programs—Title I, Mitchell-Lama, Redevelopment Companies—added 35,179 rental or cooperative apartments to the City's housing stock as of January, 1961. Since then, an additional 36,244 publicly-aided, almost exclusively middle-income units have been occupied or are under construction, and

plans for 30,838 more units are being processed. Strictly private housing has been providing an average of almost 20,000 housing units a year over the past few years, thereby standing as the City's most important source of new or rehabilitated housing.³

Since 1961, residential construction has been particularly high as private developers sought to avoid restrictions imposed by the City's newly-amended zoning ordinance, and the middle income housing program began to reach maturity. During 1962, the City registered a net gain of 40,486 units in all categories. Preliminary figures for 1963, 51,377 units, mark a 34-year high in residential construction in New York City.

Hand-in-hand with this near-record construction of housing has been the creation of new community facilities, including highways and streets, transit and sanitary facilities, schools and colleges, hospitals, parks, piers, bridges and public buildings. In 1964 alone, the Administration will allocate nearly 900 million dollars in capital funds to make New York City a better place in which to live, work and play.

One effect of current housing and public works programs, and the construction of the World's Fair, has been to promote and sustain construction employment at high levels. This has not only given an added viability to the City's economy, but has perhaps provided the basis for a continuing and more meaningful attack on some of the causes, effects and ramifications of poverty, unemployment and discrimination.

Besides seeking to meet the demand for better housing accommodations, much of the City's public and publicly-assisted housing and public works efforts are designed to renew deteriorated or deteriorating neigh-

Footnotes for this chapter are on page 55

borhoods. In 1961-1962, for instance, the City Planning Commission put into motion urban renewal plans for eighteen communities. In 1962-1963, 13 additional areas were selected, and in 1963-1964, 7 communities were designated for study leading to renewal. In addition, 5 neighborhoods were designated for Federally-assisted urban renewal treatment, with an emphasis on rehabilitation, late in 1963.

In most of the areas designated for renewal in recent years, total clearance had given way to redevelopment coupled with rehabilitation and conservation; in all, citizen participation in the renewal process had become the rule rather than the exception. This change in policy and emphasis has done much to counter past mistakes and gain better public acceptance of urban renewal programs. Planning considerations have been enhanced by the adoption of zoning requirements which will allow the City to continue to develop sound and progressive principles of land use and development, as has the initiation of the Community Renewal Program, whose purpose is to identify, measure and set priorities for New York's total residential and non-residential renewal needs.

As a result, the goal of a slumless city may perhaps be within sight: one observer suggests that, all relevant factors being held constant, New York City could liquidate its slums by 1985. Nonetheless, the objective has not been reached. Mainly as a result of the very real moratorium on construction between 1929 and 1946, extensive slums exist in the richest city in the richest nation in the world. This is indicated by 1960 census data which suggests that almost 350,000 of New York City's dwelling units are deteriorating, while another 84,000 are dilapidated. Even among the 2,330,847 sound housing units, 126,000 lack a private toilet, bath of running water.⁴ Forced to live under such conditions, thousands of residents of the largest metropolis in the western hemisphere quite naturally exhibit instances of personal and social disorganization that belie the material and spiritual promise of the United States. Others have turned to mass protests, including rent strikes, to register their disapproval at the pace and direction of the City's housing and renewal programs.

At the same time, many of the City's middle-class residents have fled to the suburbs, leaving in their wake a host of financial, transportation, governmental and

other related problems, as well as the old, the very young, the rich, the indigent and recent in-migrants from the South or Puerto Rico. Some left to seek in the suburbs new neighborhoods in which to raise children and enjoy the benefits of an increasingly affluent society. Others simply became demoralized about housing and social conditions in the older areas of the City, seeking solutions to these and other problems in the outlying districts of the metropolitan area. Still others were forced to leave because the old approach to slum clearance entailed the displacement of entire communities, the destruction of neighborhood values and the creation of housing developments that either lacked needed educational and community facilities or were too small, noisy, sterile, shoddy, or expensive for sound family life.

"Grey" Areas

New York City's housing and renewal problems are thus both extensive and complex. Even if all of its slum areas should and could be redeveloped overnight, attendant social aesthetic, psychological, political, racial and economic problems solved, and valuable citizens attracted back to its reclaimed core, public and private authorities would still have to face severe housing and social problems in "grey" areas. These are sections of the City which are not rock bottom slums but could so become if remedial action is not taken. They are areas in which a significant portion of the housing stock is deteriorating, though not deteriorated. They are the communities in which all of the nation's critical domestic problems are coming to the fore. Illustrative of the trend and the problems are seven areas of Manhattan which became Neighborhood Conservation Districts in the early sixties.

CHELSEA

Rich in tradition as one of New York's oldest neighborhoods, Chelsea lies between 14th and 34th Streets, the Hudson River and the Avenue of the Americas. The area's 80,000 individuals comprised a variety of ethnic and racial groupings. Its housing stock was equally variegated: Brownstones, old and new law tenements, multiple dwellings and some frame buildings were represented in the community's housing picture.

What was to become the at first six, and then nine

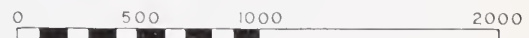
CHELSEA

BLOCKS		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL
POPULATION	TOTAL	1257	2803	1660	1139	216	1598	1653	1456	11,782
ALL HOUSING UNITS	TOTAL	628	1686	1099	722	34	1093	970	748	6,980
% Sound		55	100	31	44	100	94	62	76	70
% Deteriorating		44	—	40	55	—	6	28	22	23
% Dilapidated		1	—	29	1	—	—	10	2	7
OCCUPIED UNITS	TOTAL	614	1644	939	678	34	1033	889	730	6,561
No. Non-White		21	5	100	24	1	24	21	14	210
% Non-White		3	—	11	3	—	2	2	2	3
% W/1.01+ per Rm.		13	6	32	18	—	17	14	17	16
RENTED UNITS	TOTAL	606	1621	934	656	34	1025	877	717	6,470
Avg. No. Rms. per Unit		2.7	2.5	1.3	2.0	5.3	1.9	2.2	2.4	2.5
Avg. Monthly Rent per Unit		\$54	\$137	\$54	\$73	\$36	\$74	\$57	\$58	\$68

Source: U. S. Census of Housing, 1960



CHelsea NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT



block Neighborhood Conservation District was a microcosm of the larger area. Like its sister neighborhoods, it began to change in the early fifties. Newcomers, mainly from Puerto Rico, began to occupy accommodations formerly held by Irish and other North European settlers, many of whom were employed in longshore and related maritime pursuits and were beginning to leave Manhattan for other boroughs and the suburbs. In accommodating the changing population, some Chelsea property owners began to convert family-centered buildings to rooming houses in which large families resided in one or two rooms. On one block, 17 of 24 brownstones were converted from Class "A" residences to Class "B" rooming houses between 1950 and 1960. Overcrowding became a serious problem in the converted buildings, as was poor and deferred maintenance in the five and six-story tenements. One result of this was that 27 percent of the area's housing units were rated substandard by the 1960 Census; another was the creation of a superficially integrated but actually segregated neighborhood.

Chelsea was also beset by serious social problems. With major construction underway in adjacent neighborhoods, vagrants began to drift into the neighborhood, as well as from the docks to the west. Lying between Greenwich Village and the Times Square area, the area began to be plagued by individuals engaged in organized vice. Racial and ethnic tensions were high. Because of the almost daily clashes between disparate neighborhood groups, one block in what was to become the Chelsea Conservation District began to be known as "Little Korea." As one observer noted, "Chelsea is changing . . . if left to itself it will continue to change in the direction of decay and disorder."⁵

How Chelsea could change for the better was a matter of contention. By the spring of 1959, the Penn Station South Title I Project—which lies immediately to the north of the Neighborhood Conservation District—had begun to displace thousands of Chelsea residents. Many were middle-aged or elderly whites who had modest incomes and were of the Roman Catholic persuasion. Others were younger, low income residents who were recent arrivals from Puerto Rico. Almost all were opposed to the six-block, cooperative housing project, resented being displaced from Chelsea, and wanted, if anything at all, low-income public housing

projects to meet their housing needs. On the other side stood many of the area's long-time and more affluent tenants, home owners and merchants. This group was appalled by what it conceived to be the recent and rapid deterioration of the community. They wanted to reverse the pattern by initiating upper middle, middle and perhaps some lower income housing developments.

The conflict over the direction in which Chelsea would develop permeated the entire community, and was particularly pronounced in its power structure. The Chelsea Community Council—a grouping of all of the major organizations and agencies in the area—was divided, with the Hudson Guild, a settlement house, and a number of other organizations withdrawing from the organization in June, 1959 because of the ". . . divisive nature of the Council's leadership." Forming a Committee for Neighborhood Development, they were attacked by the remaining members of the Council for proposing another slum clearance project for Chelsea. Plagued by a quarreling leadership, and a generally apathetic citizenry, it was not surprising that the area's headlong rush into an all out slum condition seemed unstoppable in the early summer of 1959.

BLOOMINGDALE

By 1959, the Bloomingdale district of Manhattan's Upper West Side had become a staging area for the flight to the suburbs. Predominantly Jewish in composition, the soon-to-be designated twelve and then twenty-four block Neighborhood Conservation District was beset by a host of problems. The middle-income residents of the high-rise multiple dwellings on Riverside Drive and West End Avenue were panic-stricken about the deteriorating condition of the neighborhood. Of concern were the growing number of serious code violations in the area's buildings, many of which had been converted to rooming houses, single-room occupancy buildings or had declined from second and third to "twelfth and thirteenth" rate hotels. Overcrowding was pronounced in most of these units, an additional and major factor contributing to their decline. The maintenance and service in the middle-class buildings had also dropped sharply, further depressing property values in the neighborhood.

Socially, too, Bloomingdale was in trouble, Alcohol-



View of neighborhood at Broadway and 100th Street

ism and drug addiction were critical problems in some of the district's brownstones, which also housed an increasing number of individuals with serious physical, psychological, marital and familial problems. Increased personal disorganization was leading to social disorientation and general community demoralization. Police protection was inadequate: This was true of other municipal services, as well as those rendered by private social agencies, none of whose efforts was even remotely coordinated or directed towards realistic improvement goals.

Many of the white residents attributed the community's decline to the movement of Negroes and Puerto Ricans into the neighborhood. Racial and ethnic prejudice combined with class antagonisms to create a climate of intergroup hostility, fear and distrust. White parents began to withdraw their children from the area's public schools: at one point it was estimated that 75 percent of the area's middle income children were attending private schools. As a result, *de facto* segrega-

tion was becoming the rule in the public schools, whose services dropped, thereby inviting further flight to the suburbs. Without leadership, impoverished, ignored and threatened, minority group members neither participated in community organizations nor used community facilities.

The situation was such that 750 residents petitioned the Manhattan Borough President for a program that would stop conditions "seriously threatening the physical safety, health and peace of mind of the residents." They petitioned, further, for "a wholesome, integrated neighborhood, not a segregated slum area." They were hopeful that "... we could at least try to hold the residents still living here and begin to build so that we can attract back those who have fled to the suburbs." Afraid to traverse some of the streets to use the neighborhood's cultural and recreational facilities, heretofore "cliff dwellers" had become unwilling observers or participants in an undramatic though real life version of the "West Side Story."

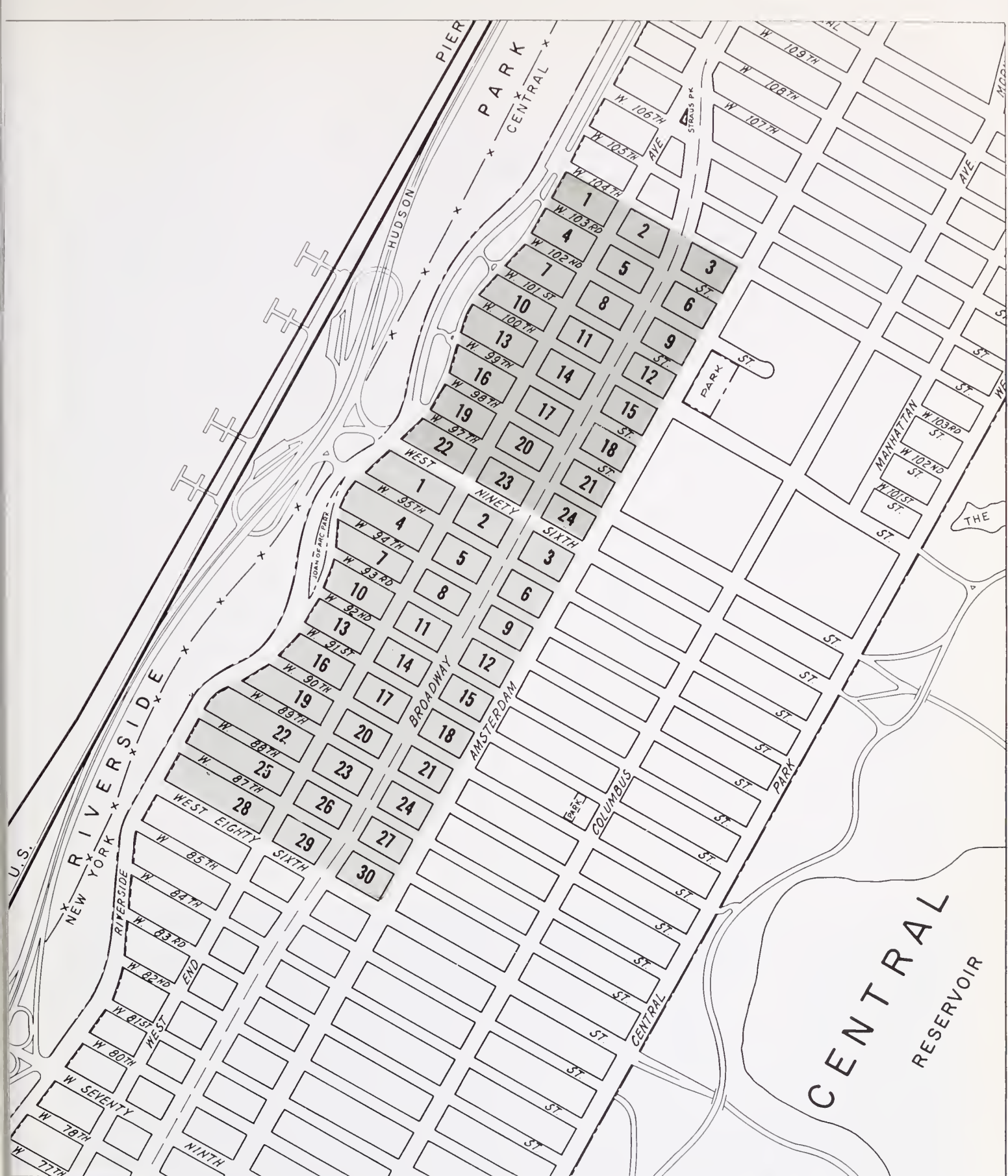
BLOOMINGDALE

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
POPULATION	TOTAL	1240	918	596	1080	1378	1088	988	960
ALL HOUSING UNITS	TOTAL	669	423	233	462	943	430	398	440
% Sound		100	73	90	90	97	65	100	100
% Deteriorating		—	22	10	5	3	32	—	—
% Dilapidated		—	5	—	5	—	3	—	—
OCCUPIED UNITS	TOTAL	663	406	227	453	822	414	390	425
No. Non-White		62	55	34	17	189	109	66	86
% Non-White		9	13	15	4	23	26	17	20
% W/1.01+ per Rm.		8	13	17	2	25	38	12	30
RENTED UNITS	TOTAL	652	406	223	450	816	413	388	417
Avg. No. Rms. per Unit		2.6	3.2	3.4	4.4	1.6	2.2	3.8	2.1
Avg. Monthly Rent per Unit (\$)		121	105	77	131	95	68	122	76

		9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
POPULATION	TOTAL	977	1355	716	982	1621	1052	624	1580
ALL HOUSING UNITS	TOTAL	631	585	316	311	699	514	442	829
% Sound		91	100	96	92	100	100	100	87
% Deteriorating		3	—	4	2	—	—	—	13
% Dilapidated		6	—	—	6	—	—	—	—
OCCUPIED UNITS	TOTAL	586	569	307	309	670	477	402	791
No. Non-White		227	26	142	11	88	210	256	234
% Non-White		39	5	46	3	13	44	64	30
% W/1.01+ per Rm.		20	6	25	10	10	35	22	16
RENTED UNITS	TOTAL	580	552	301	306	667	447	402	780
Avg. No. Rms. per Unit		1.9	3.9	2.4	4.2	3.8	1.9	1.7	2.5
Avg. Monthly Rent per Unit (\$)		68	125	90	110	110	94	83	96

		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	TOTAL
POPULATION	TOTAL	1073	972	941	1211	856	952	892	350	24,312
ALL HOUSING UNITS	TOTAL	519	383	396	550	271	457	650	155	11,666
% Sound		97	87	100	94	90	19	100	100	91
% Deteriorating		2	13	—	6	10	51	—	—	7
% Dilapidated		1	—	—	—	—	30	—	—	2
OCCUPIED UNITS	TOTAL	498	380	383	500	264	453	647	149	11,185
No. Non-White		41	44	15	78	9	60	25	3	2,087
% Non-White		8	11	4	16	3	13	4	2	19
% W/1.01+ per Rm.		6	13	5	13	10	16	10	5	15
RENTED UNITS	TOTAL	484	379	370	476	263	452	645	143	11,012
Avg. No. Rms. per Unit		3.1	3.5	3.9	3.2	4.4	3.0	1.6	3.0	3.0
Avg. Monthly Rent per Unit (\$)		95	82	117	108	103	95	98	79	99

Source: U. S. Census of Housing, 1960



BLOOMINGDALE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT

HUDSON NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT

HUDSON

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
POPULATION	TOTAL	981	675	538	2070	447	934	1772	878	347	1392
ALL HOUSING UNITS	TOTAL	542	539	218	1361	237	658	907	388	220	691
% Sound		67	100	100	86	96	79	70	88	100	30
% Deteriorating		28	—	—	14	4	21	30	6	—	40
% Dilapidated		5	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	—	30
OCCUPIED UNITS	TOTAL	535	486	218	1326	237	601	889	385	202	674
No. Non-White		20	12	46	369	4	118	60	17	19	116
% Non-White		4	2	21	28	2	20	7	4	9	17
% W/1.01+ per Rm.		11	11	14	19	5	17	12	4	13	20
RENTED UNITS	TOTAL	533	483	218	1321	237	582	862	339	196	670
Avg. No. Rms. per Unit		2.4	1.6	3.3	1.6	3.1	1.6	2.6	4.0	2.2	2.5
Avg. Monthly Rent per Unit (\$)		87	119	86	74	95	85	99	131	90	87

		11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
POPULATION	TOTAL	1084	824	1052	648	971	758	703	958	1426	664
ALL HOUSING UNITS	TOTAL	654	347	535	288	364	380	355	558	522	225
% Sound		92	100	92	71	100	100	92	100	90	100
% Deteriorating		8	—	8	29	—	—	7	—	5	—
% Dilapidated		—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	5	—
OCCUPIED UNITS	TOTAL	576	345	521	282	364	368	317	548	514	225
No. Non-White		15	—	10	7	6	4	32	15	24	2
% Non-White		3	—	2	2	2	1	10	3	5	1
% W/1.01+ per Rm.		9	2	9	19	6	6	16	20	6	3
RENTED UNITS	TOTAL	575	337	515	280	354	347	306	543	513	223
Avg. No. Rms. per Unit			2.8	4.1	2.9	3.1	3.7	3.8	2.4	2.1	3.8
Avg. Monthly Rent per Unit (\$)		137	122	106	106	78	131	90	123	148	168

		21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	TOTAL
POPULATION	TOTAL	875	1535	567	822	1578	712	713	2557	11	715	29,207
ALL HOUSING UNITS	TOTAL	365	793	260	348	1143	377	315	1175	4	255	15,004
% Sound		100	100	96	98	99	38	28	98	—	100	86
% Deteriorating		—	—	—	2	1	9	54	2	—	—	10
% Dilapidated		—	—	4	—	—	53	18	—	—	—	4
OCCUPIED UNITS	TOTAL	356	781	250	347	998	358	300	1122	—	251	14,376
No. Non-White		64	16	4	14	48	12	80	15	—	1	1,150
% Non-White		18	2	2	4	5	3	27	1	—	—	8
% W/1.01+ per Rm.		3	8	2	9	7	15	30	6	—	1	11
RENTED UNITS	TOTAL	355	765	243	339	982	356	297	1107	—	247	14,125
Avg. No. Rms. per Unit		4.3	3.1	4.0	3.9	2.2	2.8	2.6	2.9	—	5.8	3.1
Avg. Monthly Rent per Unit (\$)		141	109	133	99	111	106	63	135	—	186	112

Source: U. S. Census of Housing, 1960

HUDSON

Immediately to the south of Bloomingdale, Hudson had many of the former's characteristics, including the fact that available land was over-utilized and virtually no residential construction had been undertaken in the area since the twenties. A largely middle-class community—average rentals were \$109 per month in April, 1960—fourteen percent of its dwelling units were rated substandard by the census. While many of the rent-controlled buildings along Riverside Drive, West End Avenue and Broadway had retained their original "luxury" characteristics, others were becoming shoddy, mainly because their owners had postponed repairs and minor renovations, refrained from replacing depreciable equipment or delayed major rehabilitation projects.

More pernicious was the conversion of some brownstones to rooming houses and multiple dwellings to single-room occupancy buildings. In these cases, overcrowding, and the poor sanitation and housekeeping habits of some tenants had speeded up the normal processes of physical decay. Further complicating the pattern of deterioration was the withdrawal of some responsible owners and sound equity capital from the district. Coeval with housing blight was the marked decline in the cleanliness of the area and the recrea-

tional facilities in Riverside Park, Hudson's western boundary.

Residents might have been able to cope with the emerging problems if there had been an institutional framework within which to work. Like so many middle-class communities, however, Hudson had not needed the services provided by private social, health, welfare or recreational agencies and settlement houses; its residents themselves meeting such needs on an individual or group basis. When, in the late fifties, acute housing and social problems developed, the residents and the few incipient block organizations were effectively immobilized. Indeed, "Hudson" did not even have a name as the decade drew to a close.⁶

Commenting on the situation, a political leader suggested the "mood of the citizens is no longer reasonable. The discomfort (sic) index is high." He pointed out that the area had been left out of the City's urban renewal plans, perhaps disastrously since deterioration in Hudson could effect reclamation efforts underway or in the planning stages in adjacent neighborhoods. Noting that the population and economic trends that were changing Hudson were apt to continue for some time, he advised that the time was "ripe to undertake a coordinated and localized effort to meet the challenge and save the neighborhood."

Elderly residents of Hudson failed to take advantage of community facilities prior to start of program

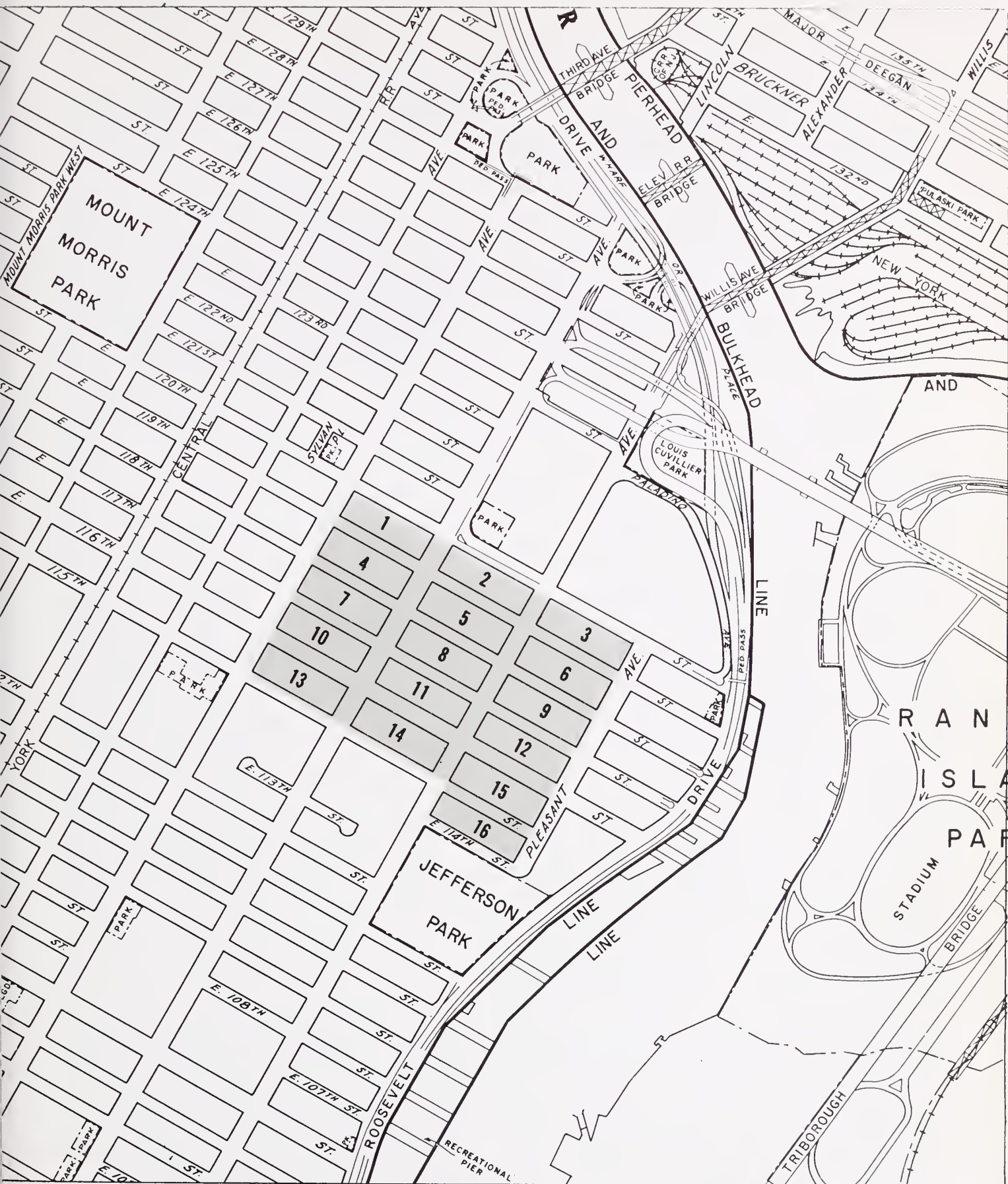


EAST HARLEM

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
POPULATION	TOTAL	394	1087	1039	1663	2065	898	993	594
ALL HOUSING UNITS	TOTAL	147	396	322	513	583	287	318	174
% Sound		76	93	97	44	34	100	100	17
% Deteriorating		14	7	3	56	38	—	—	80
% Dilapidated		10	—	—	—	28	—	—	3
OCCUPIED UNITS	TOTAL	141	386	314	507	573	282	311	165
No. Non-White		28	13	10	42	50	18	21	11
% Non-White		20	3	3	8	9	6	7	7
% W/1.01+ per Rm.		19	15	22	25	31	18	18	32
RENTED UNITS	TOTAL	140	348	293	498	554	253	305	156
Avg. No. Rms. per Unit		3.5	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	4.1	4.0	3.8
Avg. Monthly Rent per Unit (\$)		46	47	39	39	44	46	41	46

		9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	TOTAL
POPULATION	TOTAL	1285	903	778	1611	954	844	1235	1343	17,686
ALL HOUSING UNITS	TOTAL	351	296	265	526	354	304	369	434	5,629
% Sound		33	8	14	12	—	—	30	2	39
% Deteriorating		61	81	86	83	100	100	70	98	56
% Dilapidated		6	11	—	5	—	—	—	—	5
OCCUPIED UNITS	TOTAL	345	379	257	511	315	295	365	418	5,464
No. Non-White		7	19	—	12	10	6	7	12	266
% Non-White		2	7	—	2	3	2	2	3	5
% W/1.01+ per Rm.		25	21	19	16	17	12	23	27	22
RENTED UNITS	TOTAL	302	265	237	500	305	282	338	404	5,180
Avg. No. Rms. per Unit		4.1	3.9	3.7	4.0	4.1	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.9
Avg. Monthly Rent per Unit (\$)		43	43	43	45	42	42	39	39	43

Source: U. S. Census of Housing, 1960



EAST HARLEM

In speaking of its reasons for initiating an EXPERIMENTAL SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM FOR EAST HARLEM, the Community Service Society described the area between 96th and 125 Streets, Fifth Avenue and the East River in the following manner:

" . . . as a community, it is disorganized, portions of its population are highly mobile and that, as an area, it has the highest rate of delinquency, a high rate of crime, including the narcotics trade, a high incidence of significant health problems . . . a high percentage of school dropouts and that, despite its many low-rent public housing projects, the majority of its population lives in slum or near slum conditions."

One sixteen-block neighborhood in the northeast corner of the area both reflected and diverged from this pattern. Various measures of social pathology in this area were high in relation to overall indices of social stability but low in terms of those registered by really deprived, neighboring blocks. Demographically, there was a higher proportion of Italians to Puerto Ricans and Negroes. Physically, there was a relatively lower ratio of old and new law tenements to brownstones and multiple dwellings. Home ownership in the district contrasted favorably with that for East Harlem as a whole, but did not prevent an extremely high percentage of the dwelling units from being classified as substandard in April, 1960.

Because many second and third generation Italian families had moved to the suburbs, an age imbalance had been created in the neighborhood. In turn, this had caused a fairly high incidence of emotional and physical problems associated with longevity, for which services were inadequate, a situation that was further complicated by the in-migration of Puerto Ricans and to a lesser extent, Negroes, relatively young population groups. As in other districts, the recent and rapid movement into the district of low-income, minority group members triggered intergroup, particularly youth gang frictions, though tending to mask the fact that the housing stock was beginning to deteriorate under the impact of increasing absentee ownership. Even with these problems, the neighborhood stood as a social and physical oasis in East Harlem: This in spite of the severe personnel shortages faced by almost every

municipal department and private social agency attempting to serve the area.

CARNEGIE HILL

Carnegie Hill was marked by sharp contrasts. Along Fifth Avenue, 15 and 20-story building punctuated the skyline, providing the residents of the luxury and near luxury apartments and cooperatives with an unexcelled view of Central Park. On the side streets between Fifth and Madison Avenue, structures given over to the pursuits of education, culture and international amity were interspersed between the town houses of the near rich. Past Madison, down 98th and 99th Streets, affluence turned to poverty. Five and six story old and early new law tenements provide their residents with an unexcelled view, or more likely sound of the elevated New York Central Railroad tracks. Treeless side streets gave access to the broken steps and the long, dark hallways of building dedicated, it would seem, to human suffering. In final contrast were the reasonably well-kept walkups and elevator buildings on 96th and 97th Streets. Housing the area's white collar, business and professional people, the buildings provide " . . . a stratum of middle-class respectability that separates the rich from the desolate."⁷

Carnegie Hill was equally characterized by fairly rapid and pervasive physical and social change. As described in 1960 by a special housing committee of the Lexington Democratic Club:

"Ten years ago, this two-block area (98th and 99th Streets, Madison to Park) was a pleasant family neighborhood . . . where the apartment buildings were reasonably well-cared for and a tenant could safely leave her baby carriage in the hall. Now . . . people who have lived there for ten to twenty years are beginning to move out . . . robberies and muggings are a problem . . ."

The report noted that the decade had witnessed a change from pride in buildings and apartments to a situation where the area's real estate was being badly managed. Janitorial services—the sometime function of an exploited and exploiting "wino"—and garbage disposal were poor. Rodent infestation had become a major problem. Broken windows, stairs, doors and plaster were common sights in building that had not really been cleaned or painted for years.

TABLE I
SELECTED POPULATION AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW YORK CITY,
MANHATTAN AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

	New York City	Manhattan	Totals for all Districts	Bloomingdale	Carnegie Hill	Chelsea	East Harlem	Hamilton Grange	Hudson	Morningside
Total Population	7,781,984	1,698,281	99,007	24,224	5,690	12,977	17,686	6,706	29,217	2,447
Total Units	2,758,419	727,401	45,517	11,627	2,008	7,637	5,629	2,414	15,008	1,194
Total Sound Units	2,330,847	536,162	35,445	10,564	1,892	5,555	2,213	1,362	12,916	943
Total Deteriorating Units	343,324	150,436	8,241	815	107	1,637	3,157	764	1,543	218
Total Dilapidated Units	84,248	40,803	1,831	248	9	445	259	288	549	33
% Sound Units	85%	74%	78%	91%	93%	73%	39%	56%	86%	79%
% Deteriorating Units	12%	21%	18%	7%	5%	21%	56%	32%	10%	18%
% Dilapidated Units	3%	5%	4%	2%	1%	6%	5%	12%	4%	3%
% Units occupied by Non-White	13%	22%	18%	18%	10%	37%	5%	77%	8%	98%
% Units having 1.01 persons per room or more	12%	13%	14%	15%	9%	15%	21%	15%	11%	20%
% Units Renter Occupied	78%	96%	94%	95%	92%	96%	94%	91%	96%	96%
% Units Owner Occupied	22%	4%	6%	5%	8%	4%	6%	2%	4%	4%
Average Rental Per Month	\$76	\$85	\$85	\$98	\$101	\$65	\$43	\$62	\$112	\$60
Average Number Rms. per Unit	4.0	3.3	3.8	3.3	5.2	3.4	4.4	4.0	3.3	3.4

Source: U. S. Census of Housing: April, 1960—Series HC (3)—275, City Blocks

CARNEGIE HILL

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
POPULATION	1475	693	1230	1,074	1218	5,690
ALL HOUSING UNITS	421	278	395	428	486	2,008
% Sound	86	89	94	99	100	94
% Deteriorating	14	7	6	1	—	5
% Dilapidated	—	4	—	—	—	1
OCCUPIED UNITS	416	274	391	423	479	1,983
No. Non-White	174	—	20	7	8	209
% Non-White	42	—	5	2	2	10
% W/1.01+ per Rm.	22	3	12	1	5	9
RENTED UNITS	407	221	386	370	471	1,855
Avg. No. Rms. per Unit	4.6	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.4
Avg. Monthly Rent per Unit (\$)	64	122	52	165	103	101

Source: U. S. Census of Housing, 1960



CARNEGIE HILL NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The area was in rapid social transition. Irish and Polish families, who made up the majority of the district's population at the close of World War II, began to leave in the early fifties. In their place came Puerto Ricans and Negroes, many of the latter in-migrants from the South. The Spanish-speaking newcomers settled on the south side of 98th Street, while Negroes took available accommodations on the north side of 98th and the south side of 99th Streets. Remaining Irish and Polish families predominated on 97th Street. Thus, Carnegie Hill was stratified by economic class—Madison Avenue serving as the buffer—and racial and ethnic groupings—98th Street was the line of demarcation.

With physical and social change came tensions. Neighborhood youth divided into informal groupings and conducted forays into the "territory" of rival adolescents. Though not formally "fighting" gangs, the groups of youth who banded together caused more than a little damage to the well being of the neighborhood. Their elders, in turn, blamed the ethnic and racial groups to which they did not belong for the decline of the neighborhood. Tensions seemed to be increasing from month to month and were not allayed by the trans-Madison Avenue grouping, one of whom is reported as saying:

*"They (Negroes and Puerto Ricans) know their place. I'll say that for them. They don't come across the street to annoy us. In the evening, none of us go over there."*⁸

With tension came fear. Shopkeepers interviewed by members of the Lexington Club expressed anxieties about reprisals if they talked about the true condition of the neighborhood. They advised interviewers: "Never come up here at night." Their fears were not unfounded. Incidents of a criminal nature had posed serious recruiting problems to institutions serving the area, among them Mt. Sinai Hospital. One policeman, showing concern about his "beat", stated that "I hate to think what the neighborhood will be like unless something is done to stem the tide."

With fear came nostalgia and apathy in this almost classical case of neighborhood decline. Older residents, resentful of the changes, repeatedly spoke of how the neighborhood used to be and expressed the desire for a return of what were apparently "idyllic" conditions.

Others accepted the changes but despaired at improving conditions. A small businessman, whose store window had been broken eight times in a year, succinctly summed up this feeling by saying that "... there wasn't any use in every trying to do anything about it." Other residents with a potential for leadership were conveniently too busy to assist in reversing the decay, though, of course, wishing others well in any "do good" project to improve the neighborhood. Finally, there was almost no communication between the residents of the area. The affluent did not usually discuss neighborhood problems and solutions with middle-class residents, who generally would have nothing to do with the poor, especially if they were Negro or Puerto Rican, whose lack of communication could not be attributed to language barriers, to say the least.

MORNINGSIDE

Unlike the six other districts, Morningside was not in far-reaching physical and social transition at the time it launched its Neighborhood Conservation Program. Until the early twenties, the area had been a bastion for those who served the educational institutions on Morningside Heights. With the in-migration of Southern Negroes during and following World War I, it began to change. In contrast to much of the rest of Harlem below 125th Street, it retained its essentially owner-occupied, family centered character. Morningside was a second "strivers row" where Negroes in the service occupations began the process of denial and saving that leads to home ownership. These families were joined in ownership or long-time leaseholds by members of the small, newly-emerging Negro professional and business classes.

The economics of discrimination, accentuated by the depression, caused a change in the pattern. Unable to meet the expenses entailed in the ownership and maintenance of property, the owners and lessees began to take in "roomers." Units were rented to couples or individuals, many of whom were distant relatives or friends "just up from the South." With the housing shortage caused by World War II, this form of renting became more pronounced, sometimes to the point where sub-tenants had tenants.

A decade later, time, the elements and poor management were beginning to take their toll of the Morn-

TABLE 2

**SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS,
NEW YORK CITY, MANHATTAN AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS: APRIL, 1960**

	New York City			Borough of Manhattan			Neighborhood Conservation Districts		
	1950	1960	Change In Percentage-Points	1950	1960	Change In Percentage-Points	1950	1960	Change In Percentage-Points
POPULATION									
White	90%	85%	—5	79%	75%	—4	85%	77%	—8
Negro	9%	14%	+5	20%	23%	+1	14%	21%	+7
Other Races	1%	1%	No Change	1%	2%	+1	1%	2%	+1
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL COMPLETED¹ (Percentage is of adults age 25 and over)									
8 yrs. Elementary School	23%	20%	—3	18%	17%	—1	17%	16%	—1
4 yrs. High School	21%	22%	+1	20%	20%	No Change	22%	20%	—2
4 yrs. College, or more	7%	8%	+1	10%	13%	+3	11%	15%	+4
OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION² (Percentage is of total employed)									
Professional, Technical and Managerial	22%	20%	—2	24%	25%	+1	27%	26%	—1
Clerical and Sales	27%	28%	+1	23%	23%	No Change	25%	24%	—1
Craftsmen and Factory Workers	33%	29%	—4	27%	22%	—5	26%	23%	—3
Services, Labor and other	18%	23%	+5	26%	30%	+4	22%	27%	+5
FAMILY INCOME (Median Annual)	*	\$6091	N.A.	*	\$5338	N.A.	*	\$5212	N.A.

Source: U. S. Censuses of Population and Housing: 1950, 1960

*—Not Available

N.A.—Not Applicable

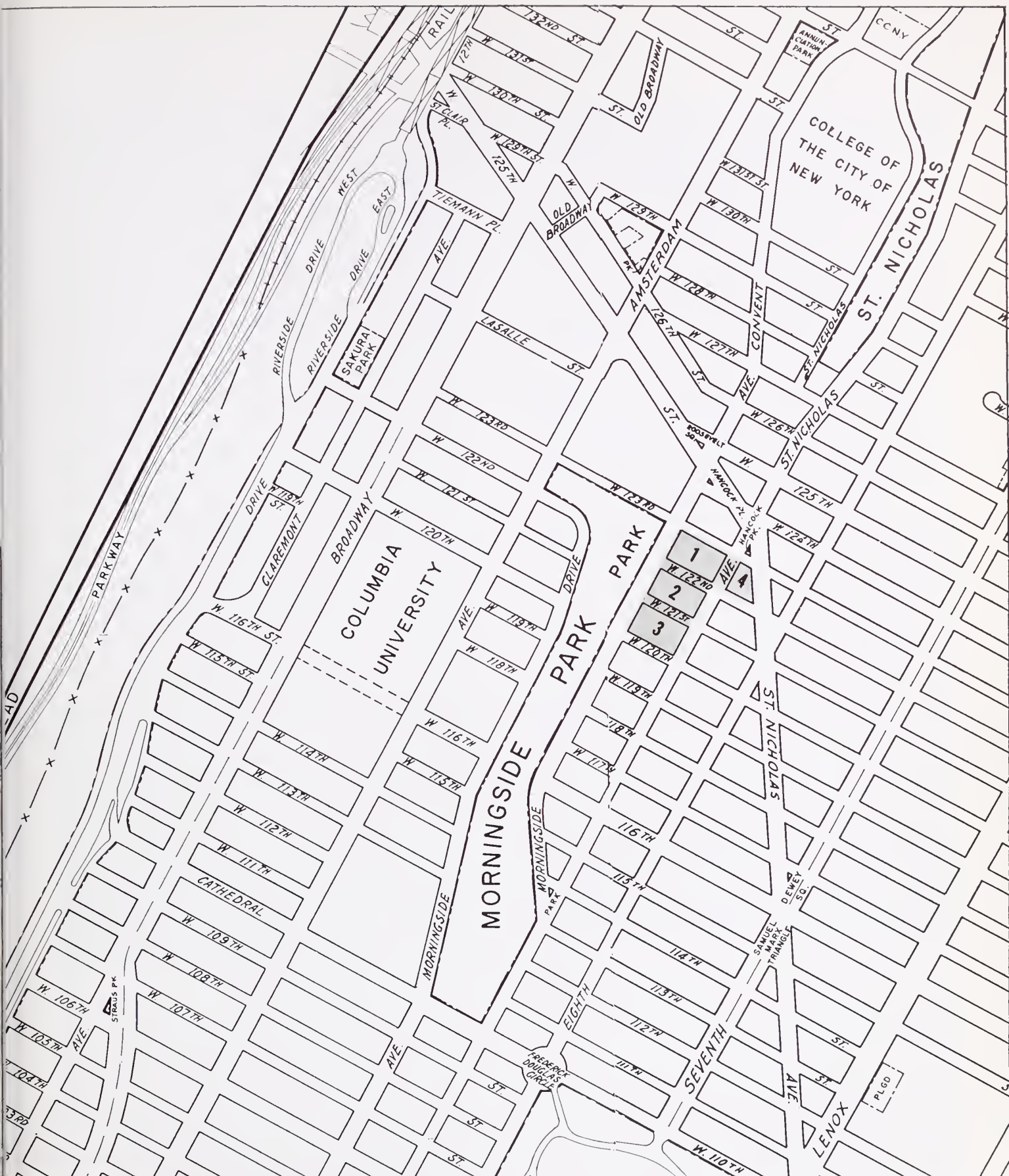
1) Percentages represent completion of specific level shown, intermediate grade levels completed are not included.

2) As above with respect to other occupations.

MORNINGSIDE

		1	2	3	4	TOTAL
POPULATION	TOTAL	864	484	683	416	2,447
ALL HOUSING UNITS	TOTAL	379	285	347	183	1,194
% Sound		34	100	100	100	79
% Deteriorating		57	—	—	—	18
% Dilapidated		9	—	—	—	3
OCCUPIED UNITS	TOTAL	371	277	341	183	1,172
No. Non-White		371	277	341	183	1,172
% Non-White		100	100	100	100	100
% W/1.01+ per Rm.		27	25	18	5	20
RENTED UNITS	TOTAL	365	268	328	181	1,142
Avg. No. Rms. per Unit		2.4	1.7	2.4	3.3	2.5
Avg. Monthly Rent per Unit (\$)		66	48	58	67	60

Source: U. S. Census of Housing, 1960



MORNINGSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT

ingside brownstones, most of which had been built prior to 1898. Much of the decay was attributable to the interdict on mortgage financing in Harlem and other minority group areas raised by New York City lending institutions. The ownership of homes by widows and the advancing age of all owners were additional factors contributing to limited resources and, thus, limited property improvements. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the buildings were structurally sound; many had been maintained in an above average manner and a few had recently undergone moderate rehabilitation as the fifties drew to a close.

On the social level, Morningside was not plagued by acute problems at the time of becoming a Neighborhood Conservation District. Racially homogeneous, intergroup tensions were absent. Economically similar, class differentiations were minimal. An "old" area, problems with adolescents and children did not exist to an appreciable degree, nor could criminal activities be attributed to area residents. Yet Morningside was overrun with social problems. Crime and juvenile delinquency rates were high and alcoholism was far beyond what was to be expected in an area the size of Morningside. Manifestations of personal, social and group disorganization were not rare, though the majority of the residents were self-supporting. The apparent contradiction is resolved when it is realized that the area borders on one of New York City's worst slums. Quite naturally, there was a spillage of the problems induced by slum and related life conditions into the district. This was especially true because the neighborhood lies between a deteriorated segment of southwest Harlem and the inviting expanse of Morningside Park and Morningside Heights. As a result, Morningside evidenced most of the social problems of "grey" areas.

To compound these troubles, a developer broached plans for the construction of a middle-income housing project. The project, which would have necessitated the demolition of 22 brownstones, was approved by the Planning Commission in May, 1959. Board of Estimate approval was expected within a two-month period. Everyone concerned was apparently quite pleased with the progress of the prospective development. The residents were up in arms: "We are for progress," they contended, "but not at

the expense of demolishing structurally sound homes." They argued that the neighborhood was not a slum area, citing in support such facts as "... fifteen of the buildings are clear of all violations, the homes and yards are well-kept, the dwelling units are not overcrowded." A neighborhood group further suggested that condemnation proceedings would not provide the owners with enough money to purchase new homes and that "... it came with singular ill-grace that the bank committing mortgage money for the new development had refused financial assistance to residents of Harlem in the past." On the positive side, property owners pledged themselves to work with the City to improve the area and suggested alternative sites on vacant land for the housing development. The opposition finally became so strong that the bank dropped its mortgage commitment in December, 1959, at which time the Board of Estimate unanimously rejected the project. Thus, Morningside denied itself the benefits of radical surgery and was doing little in the way of preventive medicine to cure its ills. As a result, it was becoming a relatively sick community as the nineteen sixties began.

HAMILTON-GRANGE

Hamilton-Grange, which takes its name after the home of Alexander Hamilton, is deceptive. To the casual observer, it appears to be a solid middle-class, almost exclusively Negro neighborhood whose residents have taken pride in the appearance of their land and buildings. Lying just to the south and west of City College, its streets seem immaculate in comparison to others in the immediate area. Few children can be seen playing in the neighborhood, which boasts of churches of every denomination, a private hospital and a nearby park which provides the transition from Hamilton Heights to Central Harlem.

On closer observation, the park is unusable because of the presence of narcotics addicts. Some of the quiet, tree shaded streets oftentimes serve as a host for criminal acts directed at faculty and students of the College and the residents of the community. Various indices of social problems—juvenile delinquency rates, public assistance cases, the incidence of venereal disease, rates of admissions to New York State mental hospitals—had been increasing, were

high, and could be attributed not only to residents of surrounding slum areas but to a relatively new population element within the community: culturally, educationally, socially and economically deprived immigrants from America's southland.

As in many other "grey" areas, social decline followed and contributed to physical deterioration. In what was an almost circular pattern, Hamilton-Grange's more affluent families began to find better accommodations in new, sometimes integrated neighborhoods. In turn, absentee owners—95 percent were in this position in the areas surrounding the College—converted some of the formerly family-centered buildings into rooming houses, which at first attracted individuals or couples and, finally, whole families. Repairs and other needed improvements were not made in the new law tenements on Convent Avenue and Hamilton Terrace. Decay appeared first in the interior of the buildings—60 percent of those inspected in Hamilton-Grange were rated poor or fair—and then on the outside, moving rapidly thereafter, building by building, block by block. Over time, the family-centered character of the neighborhood changed to one in which most residents had little stake in schools, playgrounds, parks or community facilities. Gradually, these also declined, hastening the departure of the remaining stable element in the community and evoking the need for new public and private serv-

ices to meet changing conditions. Hamilton-Grange was perhaps following the pattern to the ultimate conclusion of neighborhood destruction: Alexander Hamilton's home—"The Grange"—was to be razed.

Grey Areas: The Problem

These seven and other "grey" areas posed a variety of problems and raised a number of questions: What, if anything, could be done to stop housing deterioration and related physical decline in "grey" areas without resorting to major clearance and redevelopment techniques? Similarly, could programs be developed to meet social problems and, if so, how could these be meshed with physical improvement activities? How could a program of this nature be initiated so as to supplement, not supplant the City's more ambitious, assisted renewal programs? If it were possible, how could it be organized in terms of available public and private resources? Would residents join the attack on physical and social blight and, if so, how could their efforts be canalized into creative and productive action? Could the City, in effect, meet change by conserving what was best and solving that which was deleterious? In many ways, the future of New York City rested on the formulation of correct answers to the complex questions posed by these and other "grey" areas.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Department of City Planning, *CHANGES IN THE HOUSING OF NEW YORK CITY, 1950-1959*, November 17, 1960 (Revised).

² *THE GOAL: BETTER GOVERNMENT, THE YEAR 1960*, Seventh Annual Report of Mayor Robert F. Wagner to the City Council and to the People of New York City, pp. 56-57. Unless current Federal and State housing legislation is passed, however, the City's public housing program will come to a complete halt in 1966. If passed, New York will receive approximately 40,000 Federally or State assisted units over the next four years.

³ Department of City Planning, *Number of Dwelling Units in Public Housing and Publicly Aided Housing*, New York City, January, 1961.

⁴ Planning, *op. cit.*, December, 1961.

⁵ The observation was made at the annual Hudson Guild Conference in the fall of 1959. The speaker appeared to be concerned about effecting positive change in an economically, racially, ethnically and religiously heterogeneous community.

⁶ This was true, too, of Bloomingdale and Carnegie Hill. Names were given to these areas by the Program and were based either on historical or geographical fact. The other districts were identifiable by name prior to the start of the Program, though residents did not necessarily think of themselves as residents of Chelsea, Morningside, Hamilton-Grange or East-Harlem.

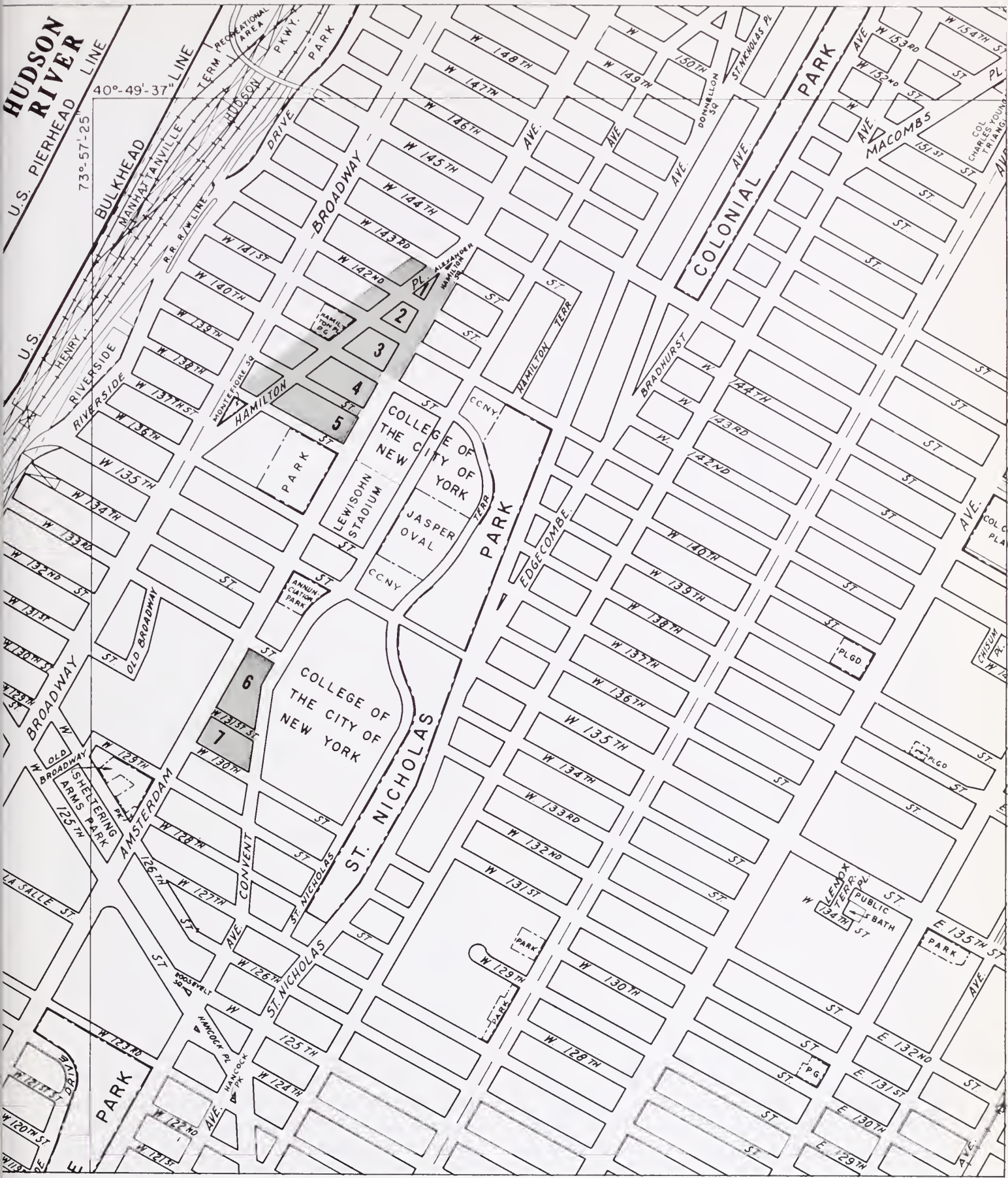
⁷ *The New York Times*, May 1, 1961.

⁸ *The New York Times*, May 1, 1961.

HAMILTON GRANGE

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL
POPULATION	TOTAL	521	595	782	822	1276	1086	734	5,816
ALL HOUSING UNITS	TOTAL	217	212	277	281	439	407	217	2,050
% Sound		100	48	61	59	95	4	17	55
% Deteriorating		—	24	39	41	5	81	6	31
% Dilapidated		—	28	—	—	—	15	77	14
OCCUPIED UNITS	TOTAL	211	206	275	276	436	394	207	2,035
No. Non-White		202	138	78	111	103	327	98	1,057
% Non-White		96	67	28	40	24	83	47	53
% W/1.01+ per Rm.		19	19	13	10	16	17	24	16
RENTED UNITS	TOTAL	208	201	270	270	432	389	197	1,967
Avg. No. Rms. per Unit		3.5	3.8	4.2	4.5	4.2	3.6	4.1	4.0
Avg. Monthly Rent per Unit (\$)		73	55	60	66	68	50	62	62

Source: U. S. Census of Housing, 1960



HAMILTON-GRANGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chapter 2

FORMULATING A SOLUTION

Introduction

In devising answers to the problems raised by “grey” areas, there was a large, though somewhat amorphous body of experience upon which to build. For years, New York City residents had banded together to initiate a variety of selfhelp programs designed to make their blocks better places to live. Public agencies concerned with housing conditions and other aspects of the physical environment had started a number of improvement programs on the neighborhood level, being prodded at times in these endeavors by local political or civic organizations. Similarly, public and private agencies dealing with social problems had been active in formulating action programs for deteriorating neighborhoods. There was not, however, any significant experience in drawing together and using the total resources of the community and public and private agencies in a concerted, coordinated and continuing attack on both housing and social problems. This was particularly true of heterogeneous neighborhoods where owner-occupancy was virtually nonexistent, the vast majority of the residents lived in rent-controlled buildings, and either prized or accepted as a cultural-given the anonymity that is a concomitant of life in New York City.

Community Participation

A first proposal for such a program was advanced in 1947 when the Citizens Union made an extensive survey of communities in New York City. In a report submitted to the City Planning Commission, it proposed subdividing New York’s five boroughs into recognized districts as a basis for more orderly planning, the decentralization of municipal services and the promotion of sound community development. The Planning Commission adopted a number of the recommendations

when, in 1950, it subdivided the City into 66 districts: “. . . designed to serve as logical units for the planning of schools, housing, hospitals, libraries, playgrounds, local street systems and other public facilities.”¹

Robert F. Wagner, as Manhattan Borough President, made a logical extension of this relatively new planning concept by establishing Community Planning Boards for each of Manhattan’s twelve planning districts. Representing a cross section of the leadership of each community, the Boards began to participate in planning the renewal of their communities by advising the Borough President on housing, social services, health, educational and other matters of local concern. Thus, a pattern was set for community leaders to share in the initiation of physical and social improvement programs and confer routinely with public officials on a variety of problems governing community development.²

The New California Hotel

The next step in the development of the Neighborhood Conservation Program occurred in 1955 when a series of newspaper articles called attention to a number of severe housing and social problems in a “hotel” in the Chelsea area of Manhattan. Spurred by the local settlement house, the Hudson Guild, an experimental program was formulated to overcome the situation presented by the building.

The New California Hotel was located on West 27th Street in what was once one of New York’s better low income neighborhoods. Converted from seven adjoining old law tenements, the “hotel” contained 96 units, housing almost 100 families containing approximately 600 individuals. The building was structurally

Footnotes for this chapter are on page 62

sound: According to one observer, six of the seven attributes which prevent slums from occurring were present in the building. Each of the units contained a private shower, water closet, sink and legal cooking facilities. Play space was ostensibly provided for children in an enclosed "patio" in the rear of the building. By his own protestations, the principal owner was not a slumlord but was concerned "about the maintenance of the property and the welfare of the tenants."

Yet the building was described as "... one of the worst slums in New York City." The then deputy commissioner of Buildings commented that "true, the facilities were there, but the use, misuse and neglect of them presented a sordid picture of slum conditions that beggars description." She went on to describe them:

"... the house can best be pictured as a mass of violations. Almost every known violation of the multiple dwelling law ... (and the) sanitary code were present. Broken plaster, rotted window frames, garbage-littered halls, leaking plumbing ... are indicative of conditions. Refrigerator doors are used as swings; halls as blackboards; stairs as toilets."

The play area was filled with rubbish and small children and babies played or slept on fire escapes. Overcrowding was rampant. Racial and ethnic tensions were often manifested in acts of violence. A general sense of despair, hatred, bitterness and neglect pervaded the building, the former "glories" of which were attested to by long time residents of the neighborhood.

The owner of the building was served with a summons for housing code violations. Prior to his scheduled appearance in Court, he requested and received an interview with officials of the Department of Buildings. During the conference he expressed the desire:

"... to do not only what the multiple dwelling law says I must do, but anything that you ask me to do, whether under your jurisdiction or not, if you can guarantee me that having expended these monies, my property will remain in a normally good condition. If not, I will be forced to demolish."³

Without giving the guarantee, public and private agencies accepted the challenge. The Department of Buildings agreed to assign an inspector to the building. His task was to explain relevant housing laws to the property owner and tenants, uncover code violations

and secure their removal. To show good faith, it was decided that the Buildings Department would issue work orders instead of formal violations, thereby excluding enforcement procedures unless the owner failed to take the indicated remedial action.

Other departments followed suit: The Department of Welfare agreed to consolidate caseloads and assigned one social investigator to work with public assistance recipients in the building. It was hoped that this arrangement would allow the worker to more readily assist in the solution of the problems affecting these families. Also assigned to the New California was an employee of the Department of Health, who was detailed to initiate tenant education programs directed towards proper nutrition and better garbage disposal practices. The Health Department also agreed to carry out housing inspections falling under its jurisdiction and inform the tenants of the services offered by the local health center. The Board of Education offered day care and recreational activities to the youth of the building. A case worker assigned by Hudson Guild coordinated the project, assisted as needed by a Spanish-speaking employee of the Office of Migration of the Department of Labor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Among other activities, a tenant organization was formed; code enforcement was launched; police protection increased; better sanitation, nutritional and health habits explained; and English classes started. There were some striking results. Heretofore unreachable tenants began to be involved in solving problems affecting themselves and the building. A major start was made toward bringing the "hotel" up to a safe, sanitary and sound condition. City departments and private agencies began to work in tandem on problems of mutual concern. The owner asked that the program continue. To some extent, the neighborhood became excited about the progress that was being made in ameliorating social and housing problems.

Nonetheless, the "New California" project was in the end a failure, primarily because of the serious social, though not illegal overcrowding in the building. Because of it, the various programs which were started did not reach their full potential. On the other hand, the techniques used in trying to reclaim the building appeared to be sound and the process whereby public and private efforts were joined in a common upgrad-

ing endeavor was to provide the basis for future Neighborhood Conservation efforts.

The West 27th Street Project

One factor contributing to the “failure” of the New California project was that the building was treated in isolation from its immediate neighborhood. Even if complete “success” had been registered in the hotel, West 27th Street would probably have continued on the downgrade, eventually threatening any improvements achieved in the New California. Realizing this, Hudson Guild took the next logical step by starting a program to conserve and rehabilitate both sides of West 27th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues.

To carry out the project, the settlement house enlisted the aid of four more public agencies: The Department of Sanitation, the Manhattan Borough President’s Office, the New York City Housing Authority and the New York State Housing Rent Commission, and added a number of new elements to its program. Among the latter were the opening of a site office on the block; the systematic orientation of landlords, residents and municipal employees about the goals and procedures of the project; and the formation of a block council. Out of these came a series of specific steps to improve buildings and help reclaim the street. Recalcitrant landlords were subjected to a variety of sanctions, including maximum fines and jail sentences for code violations. The Welfare Department was prevailed upon to relocate overcrowded public assistance recipients, thereby helping to lower the density of the block. A landlord was persuaded to convert a rooming house to a building designed for family occupancy. Most important of all, the block council provided a vehicle for the participation of residents in the decisions governing the future of their block.

The West 27th Street project was also a “failure,” due to the fact that the block was included in a Title I project and eventually cleared. Like its predecessor, however, the West 27th Street project succeeded in demonstrating some of the techniques that could be used, and the process that could be initiated to help save a block from further deterioration. Negatively, it also pointedly demonstrated that this process would demoralize residents unless there was a real commitment on the part of public officials not to raze the area.⁴

A Rent Commission Study

While Chelsea was in the midst of its prototype conservation effort, a significant research project was taking place on Manhattan’s Upper West Side. The Program Analysis Division of the New York State Temporary Housing Rent Commission had embarked on a study of “the problems and prospects for rehabilitating housing” in the Morningside Heights section of Manhattan. As described by the Commission, “the broad purpose of the federally-assisted demonstration project was to test the feasibility of rehabilitating housing within the context of owner interests, tenant income and ability to pay, the aims of the institutions in the area, community objectives, and city plans . . . The primary objective of the study . . . was to probe the basic problems of housing deterioration, to devise methods and procedures in making such an investigation, and to draw forth implications of general value to public officials and citizens concerned with the conservation of existing housing.”⁵

Among the conclusions reached was the observation that “. . . the area’s revival cannot solely depend on the initiative of individual owners. At the same time, other factors show that a definitive program supplied to community leaders might be all that is needed to spark a concerted rehabilitation effort.” The report, PROSPECTS FOR REHABILITATION, recommended four possible levels of improvements for multiple dwellings and advanced the conclusion that conventional and governmental mortgages would have to be supplemented by direct governmental loans if property owners were to be induced to undertake substantial upgrading measures.⁶ Of final interest to what was to become the Neighborhood Conservation Program was the conclusion that rooming houses and single-room occupancy buildings had to be converted if the neighborhood was to renew itself.⁷

Developing The Concept

Fusing these and other elements into a concept applicable to selected “grey” areas was a process that began in December, 1958. At that time, the Office of the Deputy Mayor was given the assignment of formulating a “slum prevention” campaign for the City. During the Spring of 1959, an Assistant to the Deputy Mayor for Neighborhood Conservation was appointed

and charged with the task of specifically designing a program to conserve and rehabilitate appropriate neighborhoods in New York City.⁸

As the concept emerged, it envisaged the municipal government working on a neighborhood basis in partnership with private agencies to arrest and reverse physical deterioration, and meet and ameliorate social problems. It contemplated action programs in neighborhoods that, from both the physical and social viewpoints, were essentially sound, though troubled; actually or potentially rich in neighborhood values; and not earmarked for major redevelopment for at least a decade. It suggested an operation that would be confined to neighborhoods that had the desire and the objective ability to be conserved and rehabilitated. Most important of all, the effort was to be undertaken in a systematic fashion, over a sustained period of time, until its goals had been achieved. At the same time, the project was to be used as a laboratory in which to devise and test new housing, social action and public administration policies, practices and procedures.

The medium through which this was to occur was that of personnel of municipal departments, commissions and boards; private social, health, welfare, educational and recreational agencies; and the property owners and residents of the neighborhoods themselves. Coordinating and properly canalizing their activities was to be the task of private sponsors and professional staff of the individual districts and the central staff of the Program. To be financed from public and private sources, the establishment of specific goals and methods was to be the joint responsibility of public and private parties to what would be the Neighborhood Conservation process.

On the physical side, the tools thought to be available included the strict enforcement of housing laws and codes governing the use and maintenance of property, with the application of rigorous sanctions to compel compliance. Secondly, the provision of economic aids and other incentives—real estate management consultant services, tax exemption and abatement programs, municipal loans, federal mortgage financing, moderate rent increases, community and peer group pressures—that would make it profitable and desirable for owners to upgrade or moderately rehabilitate deteriorating properties. Thirdly, the use of private in-

itiative or public power to convert physically and socially unsound housing to proper uses; attract responsible equity capital to the areas; and develop new housing accommodations or public facilities on vacant or under-utilized land. Fourthly, the decongestion of buildings, blocks and neighborhoods through the rigorous enforcement of occupancy standards and by the humane relocation of overcrowded families. Finally, the overall improvement of the general physical setting of the neighborhood, through a series of activities encompassing new lighting, tree planting, street and sidewalk repair, improvements in sanitation services and traffic conditions, the upgrading of vacant lots, and the refurbishment of public and private community facilities.

On the social side, other techniques were thought to be available. Public opinion and attitude surveys and other social science measures could be used to identify and describe neighborhood problems, after which goals could be established and specific programs devised to help overcome adverse situations. Law enforcement agencies could be utilized to improve neighborhood security. Public and private agencies could be called upon to facilitate more positive intergroup relations. Case work, group work and community organization techniques could be employed on an intensive basis to help overcome a variety of problems affecting individuals, families and groups. Special programs could be started to meet the specific health, mental health, welfare, educational and recreational needs of area residents. Recent in-migrants from rural areas could be assisted in improving their sanitation, housekeeping and consumer practices, and helped to adjust more readily to a northern, urban environment. Tenant organizations could be started to allow residents to solve problems which they faced in their buildings and on their blocks. Finally, communitywide organizations could be developed to deal with overall neighborhood problems and, in time, build on, sustain and further improve the physical and social gains which, hopefully, would be initiated by the Neighborhood Conservation Program.

Underlying the entire concept was the premise that the ultimate responsibility for the reclamation of "grey" areas lay in the hands of those most directly involved, neighborhood residents. Active participation by the community in the planning, decision-making and administrative processes was deemed essential if

the effort was to reach its maximum potential. It was needed, moreover, to develop the sense of identification and pride that is thought to be crucial to the development and maintenance of sound neighborhoods. To do so required the initiation of a process whereby residents could become involved in all phases of the Program and, thus, have a fundamental and abiding stake in renewing their residences, blocks and total community. It was this process, which was thought to be built into Conservation through sponsorship, volunteer and community organization activities, that underpinned the concept and its execution. Finally, the project had to be geared to meet wide variances in neighborhood problems and resources and the normal exigencies of a pioneering effort, as well as cast in a fashion that would allow critical self-examination and creative growth. The approach, therefore, was to be pragmatic rather than planned; empirical rather than theoretical.⁹

Translating the Neighborhood Conservation concept into a specific program remained the function of the Office of the Deputy Mayor until August, 1959, at which time the Program was officially announced. During this period, central staff personnel worked closely with the heads of various public agencies to prepare them for the roles they would be playing on a neighborhood basis. As the departments prepared for the project, so did a number of private agencies and neighborhood residents.¹⁰

Paralleling this activity, an approach was made to the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency to secure a Demonstration Grant under Section 314 of the 1954 Housing Act. The objective here was to gain sufficient funds from the Federal Government and the City of New York to undertake supportive staff services. Equally important was the need to demonstrate that techniques could be found to deal with physical and social problems which were beyond the ken of the ordinary services of public and private

agencies, but not so serious as to require the financial assistance of the Federal government through formal Title I aid.

Negotiations with HHFA continued until March, 1960, at which time tentative approval was given to the project; the Office of the Deputy Mayor was designated under Section 72L and 72M of the General Municipal Law of the State of New York as an Urban Renewal Board for the purpose of administering the project; and the Demonstration Grant application was approved by the Board of Estimate of the City of New York. In a letter to HHFA accompanying the formal application, Mayor Robert F. Wagner made the following statement:

"We believe that the joint efforts of the Federal Government and the City . . . will develop major new techniques for the conservation and rehabilitation of a substantial percentage of New York City's existing housing which is not scheduled for demolition or intensive rehabilitation . . . the success of this experimental program can do more to stabilize New York neighborhoods and maintain and restore wholesome family living . . . even after the time the demonstration grant will operate, the City will continue a vigorous program of municipal inspection, and other services, which are described in the application, so long as necessary."

On June 2, 1960, the Urban Renewal Administration formally approved the application and allocated the funds necessary to undertake this aspect of the Program.

In the meantime, it had been recommended that the Neighborhood Conservation Program become an integral part of what was to be the City's agency dealing with all aspects of publicly-aided renewal and housing programs. This was accomplished in the spring and summer of 1960 through legislation and the Mayor's Executive Order establishing the Housing and Redevelopment Board.¹¹

FOOTNOTES

¹ New York University Graduate School of Public Administration, *THE COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARDS OF NEW YORK*, 1961, pp. 36-37.

² In recent years, community participation has been especially spurred by the Planning Commission through its Community Renewal Program and by citizens' committees which the Housing and Redevelopment Board has created to advise it on urban renewal matters.

³ This material is based on unpublished reports of Hudson Guild and the Department of Buildings.

⁴ Undaunted, Hudson Guild moved its pioneering effort to the 400 block on West 22nd Street and continued this venture until the formal start of the Neighborhood Conservation Program.

⁵ New York State Temporary State Housing Rent Commission, *PROSPECTS*

FOR REHABILITATION: A Demonstration Study of Housing in Morningside Heights, New York City, December, 1960 p. V.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-4 ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48

⁸ The appointee, Mrs. Hortense W. Gabel, had been active in the Chelsea and Morningside Heights projects while Deputy State Rent Administrator.

⁹ Indeed, no other approach was given serious consideration; given personal, political, and other values, no other approach was really possible.

¹⁰ The Program was given particular impetus at this time by public reaction to the goals and methods of the City's old Slum Clearance Committee and by the decision of the New York-New England Regional Office of HHFA not to certify additional urban renewal projects until a program was devised to treat neighborhoods adjoining urban renewal sites.

¹¹ Mrs. Gabel continued to direct the Program, while also functioning as Assistant to the Mayor for Housing.

Chapter 3

STARTING THE PROGRAM

Introduction

Translating the Neighborhood Conservation concept into an action program required a number of steps. Residents, agencies, organizations and institutions in “grey” areas had to demonstrate their readiness to undertake the effort, which was accomplished through their initiative in asking to be included in the experiment and by their success in establishing sponsorship and, at one point in the Program’s history, obtaining necessary financing for the project. Potential districts also had to meet what were at first somewhat nebulous physical and social planning criteria to qualify for designation. A number of administrative actions—establishing an organizational structure, staffing, selecting site offices and “demonstration” blocks—had to be taken to start the venture in specific communities. Finally, property owners and residents, as well as public and private agencies, had to be informed about the Program to insure their active and direct cooperation in the attempt to reverse neighborhood blight.

Sponsoring The Program

Since the Conservation Program represents a cooperative attempt to create or recreate viable neighborhoods, it seemed essential to have private sponsorship for each district. Because of unfortunate past experiences, this was particularly true of areas which viewed solely governmentally sponsored programs with alarm if not outright hostility. From this viewpoint, sponsors were essential to the success of the Program simply in terms of combating neighborhood apathy and distrust.¹ Perhaps more important, sponsors were charged with the tasks of raising funds to underwrite part of the project’s costs, employing professional staff, overseeing the conduct of the venture, and providing a vehicle for the participation by neighborhood residents in the process of community reclamation. As in all aspects of the Conservation Program, the type and kind of sponsorship varied by individual districts:

Because of its prototype improvement activities between 1955 and 1959, Hudson Guild was the logical choice to sponsor a formal and expanded Conservation Program in Chelsea. Founded in 1895, the Guild is one of the nation’s oldest settlement houses, as well as a member of United Neighborhood Houses and a recipient of contributions directed to the Greater New York Fund. Spending a budget in excess of \$350,000 a year, the Guild is deeply rooted in Chelsea, especially through its services to the pre-school, school, teenage, young adult, adult and the elderly population of the area. Hudson Guild accepted sponsorship responsibility and began to formally oversee the Chelsea Conservation Program in August, 1959.

Located in the district, the Morningside Community Center was the prime architect in establishing the Morningside Conservation Program.² Established by the Presbyterian Church of the Master, the Center is also a member of United Neighborhood Houses and conducts a variety of programs catering to the needs of district residents. Meeting all of the criteria for sponsorship, the interfaith, interracial and international center was formally designated as the sponsor of the West Harlem venture in April, 1961.

In 1956-1957 the Community Service Society conducted a study of the resources and needs of East Harlem residents. Entitled *THE EAST HARLEM FAMILY*, the study pointed out the fact that little was really known about East Harlem even though it had been “done for” perhaps more than any comparable area in New York City. The major contribution of the analysis was to document and suggest some answers to the various problems confronting East Harlem residents.

By June of 1959, the Society’s plans for an experimental social work program were sufficiently advanced to allow it to approach the Administration to inquire about the possibility of launching a Conservation project somewhere in East Harlem. As described by C.S.C., the purpose of the venture was:

“ . . . to improve neighborhood conditions in such a way that the social climate as well as the

Footnotes for this chapter are on page 77.

physical aspects of the selected area are upgraded."

Further, the proposed project would

" . . . demonstrate that by the use of specific social work methods (casework, group-work, community organization and social action) even extremely deprived neighborhoods can be improved."

More specifically, the Society wanted to

" . . . devise, develop and test the effectiveness of social work methods within a limited geographical area where the social and psychological pathology, not only of individual families, but of the community itself, has been said to constitute a hazard to the City as a whole."

To achieve these goals, the Community Service Society proposed an East Harlem Demonstration Project of five years' duration to at first identify and then encourage indigenous leadership to help solve the area's problems; give direction and help to exceptional children and their families; and employ Conservation techniques to help develop neighborhood identity and self-esteem. The success of the Conservation Program was to be measured, in part, by the physical improvements carried out by property owners; the extent to which tenants learned to take care of property; and the degree of tenant participation in neighborhood organizations engendered by the project.

Besides being conversant with the social and housing problems of the area,³ the Community Service Society had the added sponsorship asset of being New York City's oldest and largest non-sectarian social agency. In 1959-1960, for instance, the Society spent \$3,766,551 in serving 9,362 troubled families in Manhattan, the Bronx and Queens. The funds also provided resources for a variety of research activities and programs of special assistance to the aged and the youth of the city. It undertook activities in the fields of housing and social legislation and was instrumental in improving the status and professionalization of social workers. Officially named as sponsor of the East Harlem Conservation District in May, 1960, the Community Service Society administers this activity within its Bureau of Public Affairs, in close cooperation with the Institute of Welfare Research and Division of Family Services.

The drive to start a Conservation Program in

Bloomingdale was the work of the Riverside Democrats and the Master Institute of United Arts. The former was excluded from acting as sponsor because of its political character.⁴ On the other hand, the Master Institute was eminently fitted to serve as a sponsor since it is a non-profit institution located within the district. Serving the area for three decades, the Institute houses the Riverside Museum, an auditorium and a School of Fine Arts. Joining with the Institute in sponsoring Bloomingdale is Grosvenor Neighborhood House and United Neighborhood Houses, Inc. Grosvenor was founded in 1915 and served the recreational and educational needs of the residents of the East 40's until 1958. Because of the changing socio-economic character of that area, Grosvenor moved to the Upper West Side of Manhattan in 1959. It immediately began a program of group activities for youth, teenagers and the elderly in temporary quarters and has since built a new settlement house immediately to the north of Bloomingdale.

United Neighborhood Houses, Inc. is the coordinating agency of settlement houses in New York City, four of whom serve as sponsors or co-sponsors of Neighborhood Conservation Districts. It sets standards for member agencies, holds conferences and other forums on issues of concern to the settlement house field and gives direct financial assistance to a variety of social action programs. Partially because of the pioneering nature of the Conservation effort, it agreed to act as a sponsor of Bloomingdale, specifically serving as fiduciary agent for it and, later on, Hudson.⁵

Banding together in the fall of 1959, the three sponsors established a non-profit corporation to guide the work of the district. To provide even wider community representation, an eight member steering committee was established and has since been augmented to include representatives of the Bloomingdale Conservation Association, the district's newer and larger citizens' committee.

The impetus for Conservation in Carnegie Hill was the work of the Lexington Democratic Club. In the late fall of 1958, the Club conducted a survey of housing conditions in the northernmost portion of its Assembly District, Manhattan's Ninth. Appalled by some of the conditions uncovered, it asked the Departments of Buildings and Health to initiate inspections. During the course of this investigation, the two ag-

encies unearthed a total of 867 violations of their respective codes. Prosecutions followed, with one "slumlord" receiving a \$500 fine and a 30-day suspended jail sentence.

Thereafter, the Club formed a special housing committee, charging it with finding a solution to the problems plaguing the area east of Madison Avenue and north of 96th Street. Committee members reached the conclusion that the area's housing was basically sound and should not be demolished, entailing as this would a radical change in the character of the neighborhood. With the official announcement of the Conservation Program, the committee saw the possibility of conserving and rehabilitating what was to become the Carnegie Hill area.

To do so, a more definitive survey of the district was launched. Its purpose was to describe in greater detail the deterioration taking place; uncover the major social problems besetting the neighborhood; cull opinion about the desirability of a Conservation effort; and, if possible, identify the community's indigenous leadership. Armed with these facts, which convinced its members that the area could be salvaged, the committee asked that Carnegie Hill be included in the Program. Assured by the Planning Commission that no major redevelopment was slated for the area by the City within a ten-year period, a go-ahead was given to the committee to raise the necessary funds and secure responsible sponsors to undertake the effort.

Three major institutions immediately came to mind: Mt. Sinai Hospital, St. Francis deSales Church and the Church of the Heavenly Rest. Mt. Sinai, which is supported by the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, lies within the boundaries of the Conservation District, is a major employer of the area's labor force, conducts a health clinic in an adjacent public housing project and had a long record of providing medical and social services to neighborhood residents. Moreover, it was vitally interested in arresting neighborhood blight, as was the Roman Catholic Church of St. Francis deSales, located one block to the east of the district. The St. Francis complex includes a church, parochial school and an office of Catholic Charities; its communicants constitute the majority of the district's residents. The Protestant Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest, at 90th Street and Fifth Avenue, had also been active in various programs in the dis-

trict. Many of its parishioners lived in Carnegie Hill and welcomed the opportunity to render an additional service to the community. By the summer of 1960, all three had agreed to serve as sponsors: in the words of one, "... it was something you just couldn't refuse."⁶ Their project was formally started in May, 1961.

In 1959, the Community Council of New York gave funds to initiate an "urban renewal citizen participation campaign" on the West Side of Manhattan. Designed to promote community interest and participation in the planning and execution of urban renewal projects, the campaign resulted in the formation of the Park Hudson Citizen Committee. A subcommittee was assigned the task of exploring the feasibility of a Conservation effort in the Hudson section of the area.

During its first year, the subcommittee gained considerable community support, especially as residents of Hudson became aware of the strides then being made to reclaim Bloomingdale, its immediate neighbor to the north. Convinced that an analogous effort would bring similar results, Park Hudson continued to solicit funds to start a program through the winter of 1960-1961 but with negligible results. By May of 1961, the City had announced that it would give financial assistance for Conservation Programs in neighborhoods such as Hudson. Acting as a catalyst, Park Hudson immediately made a formal application to bring Hudson into the Program, which was accomplished in November, 1961.

In contrast to the other districts, Hudson is not sponsored by neighborhood agencies or institutions, its innovators choosing to form a non-profit corporation to direct the Program, the board members of which were drawn from residents of the community. The Board initially included a former Deputy Mayor, the executive director of a settlement house, a young lawyer who did much to start the effort, an economist, a religious leader, an architect, and an official of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. As the Program developed, Hudson expanded its board by enlisting the aid of other community leaders.

Hamilton-Grange, which is sponsored by Manhattanville Hamilton-Grange, Inc., combined institutional and community support in its organization structure. One of the institutions, City College, serves over 15,000 full time students in its schools of Liberal Arts, En-

TABLE 3
SOURCES OF FINANCING
NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
1959-1964

TOTALS—ALL DISTRICTS	1959-1960	1960-1961	1961-1962	1962-1963	1963-1964
FOUNDATIONS ¹	\$ 12,100.00	\$ 59,100.00	\$ 47,000.00		
NEIGHBORHOOD SOURCES ²	29,000.00	43,450.00	29,050	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 30,500.00
GRANT-IN-AIDS ³			100,000.00	155,000.00	210,000.00
OTHER ⁴		1,000.00	1,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
TOTAL	\$ 41,100.00	\$103,550.00	\$177,050.00	\$217,000.00	\$242,500.00
DISTRICTS					
Chelsea					
Foundations	\$ 12,100.00	\$ 12,100.00			
Neighborhood Sources	9,000.00	9,000.00	\$ 3,900.00	\$ 3,900.00	\$ 3,900.00
Grant-In-Aids			25,000.00	25,000.00	30,000.00
TOTAL	\$ 21,100.00	\$ 21,100.00	\$ 28,900.00	\$ 28,900.00	\$ 33,900.00
Bloomingdale					
Foundations		\$ 5,000.00			
Neighborhood Sources	\$ 20,000.00	16,500.00			
Grant-In-Aids			\$ 25,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
TOTAL	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 21,500.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
East Harlem					
Foundations		\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00		
Neighborhood Sources		16,150.00	16,150.00	\$ 48,600.00	\$ 21,900.00
Grant-In-Aids					35,000.00
TOTAL		\$ 18,650.00	\$ 18,650.00	\$ 48,600.00	\$ 56,900.00
Carnegie Hill					
Foundations		\$ 15,000.00	\$ 20,000.00		
Neighborhood Sources		1,800.00	7,800.00	\$ 5,100.00	\$ 2,300.00
Grant-In-Aids				20,000.00	25,000.00
TOTAL		\$ 16,800.00	\$ 27,800.00	\$ 25,100.00	\$ 27,300.00
Morningside					
Foundations		\$ 24,500.00	\$ 24,500.00		
Neighborhood Sources					
Grant-In-Aids				\$ 20,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Other		1,000.00	1,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
TOTAL		\$ 25,500.00	\$ 25,500.00	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 27,000.00
Hamilton-Grange					
Foundations					
Neighborhood Sources			\$ 1,200.00	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 2,400.00
Grant-In-Aids			25,000.00	25,000.00	30,000.00
TOTAL			\$ 26,200.00	\$ 27,400.00	\$ 32,400.00
Hudson					
Foundations					
Neighborhood Sources					
Grant-In-Aids			\$ 25,000.00	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
TOTAL			\$ 25,000.00	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00

¹ Foundations
Lavenburg Foundation
Nathaniel Hoffheimer Foundation
New York Foundation
J. M. Kaplan Fund
Field Foundation
Taconic Foundation
Florina Lasker Estate
Morningside Heights Inc.
Anonymous Foundations

² Neighborhood Sources
Hudson Guild
Master Institute of United Arts
Community Service Society
Morningside Community Center
Residents and businessmen

³ Grant-In-Aid from the City of New York to sponsors of Conservation Districts

⁴ Value of donation of equipment and services

gineering, Education and Architecture, and has been involved in a number of efforts to upgrade the community in which it is located. As described by the College:

"As far back as 1944, the College established a Community Service Division that set up a program of school work and recreational services to local public schools, community centers, playgrounds, and churches, as well as street group work with delinquent groups and gangs, group dynamics research in public school classrooms, adolescent and adult discussion groups, and field studies in sociological research. Several hundred thousands of dollars of non-instructional funds have been budgeted for this program.

From 1944 to 1958 the Community Service Division provided to the college student body, especially to majors in Hygiene, Education, Psychology and Sociology, a field laboratory opportunity for citizenship, research and group work leadership training at an interdisciplinary level that stressed the functional relationship of academic theory and applied practice under educational controls.

Since 1958, City College has broadened its program of services to its community. The School of Education has taken over field group work in the neighborhood under faculty supervision as a permanent aspect of its teacher-training program. Included in this program is an extensive range of student services to a local group work agency. Another valuable field work project has been set up, under the Department of Student Life, to carry on an evaluation of patient care for the information of the administrative officials of Knickerbocker Hospital. Science, social science and arts students enrolled in this project engage in services and research activities under faculty supervision in the wards, clinics and laboratories of the hospital."

Nonetheless, the area surrounding City College was beginning to show signs of extensive deterioration and fears became pronounced that physical and social blight would jeopardize the school in the same manner that has occurred in the case of other educational institutions throughout the nation. Neither wanting nor needing clearance to solve the emerging problems, City College asked to be included in the Program but was unsuccessful in obtaining the necessary funds. With the

availability of public money in May, 1961, the College renewed its application. In this connection, it took the lead in securing other sponsors for the project and helped establish the non-profit corporation which began to direct local Conservation activities in January 1962.⁷

Manhattanville Community Center, Inc., a member of United Neighborhood Houses, is also represented on the district's governing body. Manhattanville operates community centers in Grant and Manhattanville Public Houses, to the south and west of the district. In both, it conducts nursery, day care, group work and community organization programs. It had serviced the needs of Hamilton-Grange residents for a number of years and was vitally interested in continuing and expanding these activities. Having worked with the College to start the Conservation Program, members of the Center's board readily accepted invitations to serve on the Hamilton-Grange steering body, which was true of eight community leaders. Representing a variety of backgrounds, the majority of them lived in Hamilton-Grange and had direct—and to some degree—expert knowledge about the neighborhood's needs and resources.

Financing The Program

Chelsea's informal "Conservation" efforts demonstrated that neighborhood improvement programs are not likely to succeed without the full and active support of area residents, agencies and institutions. It was clear from the prototype projects that the community must identify with goals of the project, as well as actually become involved in the process of area betterment, if Neighborhood Conservation was to succeed. To help insure the neighborhood's stake in the venture, Conservation established a number of criteria for selecting districts. One provided that the sponsoring bodies of the first five districts raise approximately \$40,000 for a two-year period to employ professional staff and undertake necessary project expenses. More realistically, private financing actually allowed the Program to start since public funds were not at first available for staffing and operating the districts.

In raising the money, sponsors were usually faced with the problem that local resources were not in themselves sufficient to finance the work. Other support had

to be obtained. As can be seen in Table 3, foundations provided most of the necessary funds during the initial stages of the project, with local groups raising additional funds or contributing to ancillary projects.

By May of 1961, it was clear that other steps would have to be taken to sustain the Program. Foundation and neighborhood sources could not be expected to carry the districts over the time period needed to complete their work, which was itself an unknown quantity. Then, too, otherwise qualified neighborhoods were having difficulty in raising the necessary funds to start projects. Since Chelsea and Bloomingdale might be without funds when their initial two year commitments ended in the early fall of 1961, the Program decided to ask for tax levy funds to carry on old, and initiate new Neighborhood Conservation Districts.

Based on the Program's initial success, the Board of Estimate appropriated \$300,000 for fiscal 1962-1963 for these and other purposes.⁸ This enabled the Program to strengthen central staff services and, through a grant-in-aid program, allocate funds to continue the Chelsea and Bloomingdale projects, who were required to raise additional funds to improve services and insure and maintain the public-private character of Conservation. Funds from this appropriation also allowed Hudson and Hamilton-Grange to start.⁹

Between August, 1959 and June, 1960, central staff services were provided by the Office of the Mayor of the City of New York. After a year's work, it became evident that additional services were needed. Achievement of this objective was at first realized in June, 1960 when the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency contributed \$136,000 to the Program and the City of New York authorized the spending of an additional \$68,000 in services, for a total expenditure of \$204,000 for the two-year period ending in June, 1962. The funds provided the seven Conservation Districts with administrative, social work, housing, planning, research and real estate management consultant services. New York City has also been expending sums for relocation purposes and the improvement of lighting, sanitation and other municipal services in the districts. The attachment of municipal employees to the district has also meant an additional though indirect outlay of City funds.¹⁰ With the end of the Fed-

eral grant, New York City has allocated the necessary funds to continue and expand the Program.

Planning The Districts

The Conservation Program was conceived as an attempt to improve housing and social conditions by changing the normal policies and procedures of, and allocating more than the usual resources available to cooperating public and private agencies. As such, the Program neither desired nor qualified for Federal assistance under Title I of the Housing Act. This arrangement had the advantage of allowing the districts to be chosen and the Conservation process to begin without the need for the elaborate and oftentimes lengthy physical planning that is associated with the designation and execution of formal urban renewal projects.¹¹

Also coloring the initial selection of districts was the then overreaction to previous excesses in New York City's clearance and redevelopment efforts, a reaction that assumed that almost all buildings and neighborhoods could be saved through improvement efforts; the initial dependency of the Program on private financial resources; the active hostility of some physical planners to the project; and the pioneering nature of the Program, which precluded advance knowledge about which buildings and neighborhoods were and were not suitable for Conservation.

These factors tended to give a subjective character to the selection of Conservation Districts. In contrast were the application of other criteria. The Program sought to select areas which had basically sound, though deteriorating housing to meet its overriding goals. It also sought neighborhoods which were not earmarked for major redevelopment within a ten-year period since clearance would destroy almost all of the values that could possibly be achieved by the project during its existence. Where possible, the Program looked for communities which abutted on public or publicly-aided housing developments or major institutions to protect and be protected by them from adverse influences. Theoretically, each area had to have physical, historical, or man-made boundaries which allowed them to be treated as a meaningful whole, as well as a potential for a sense of "neighborhood," an almost indefinable quality which would allow residents

to identify with the neighborhood and, through Conservation, its reclamation. Finally, the areas had to be free of gross manifestations of personal social disorganization and demoralization. Otherwise, while the Program might possibly though not probably succeed on the physical plane, it would be defeated by insoluble social problems.

In terms of all of the latter criteria, Hudson clearly qualified as a Neighborhood Conservation District. With the expansion of their boundaries in the fall of 1961; the same was true of Chelsea and Bloomingdale.¹² Except for its "open" northern and eastern boundaries, Morningside met almost all of the objective standards. Where this was not so, it was thought that the redevelopment of adjoining slum areas under the Morningside General Renewal Plan would allow Conservation to succeed within the designated four block area.

Hamilton-Grange, Carnegie Hill and East Harlem at first seemed to meet almost all of the relevant physical and social planning criteria. As their boundaries were drawn, each appeared to be a viable neighborhood in which the application of Conservation techniques was both feasible and desirable. Subsequent experience, related in this report, proved that this was not the case.¹³

As a process, Neighborhood Conservation Districts are now selected by a joint task force composed of officials of the City Planning Commission and the Housing and Redevelopment Board, after appropriate study by the Commission's Community Renewal Program; application by neighborhood groups for a Conservation program; and in keeping with City renewal priorities and resources.¹⁴

Administering The Program

The day-to-day work of carrying out neighborhood improvements was largely the province of municipal employees assigned to work in the districts or assisting the Program as a whole. Inspectors were assigned to each district by the Departments of Buildings, Health, Sanitation, Fire and Water Supply, Gas and Electricity.¹⁵ Backstopping them in code enforcement, activities were personnel from the legal divisions of these departments, the Office of the Penalties Division of

the Corporation Counsel, the New York City Rent and Rehabilitation Administration and the Department of Welfare.

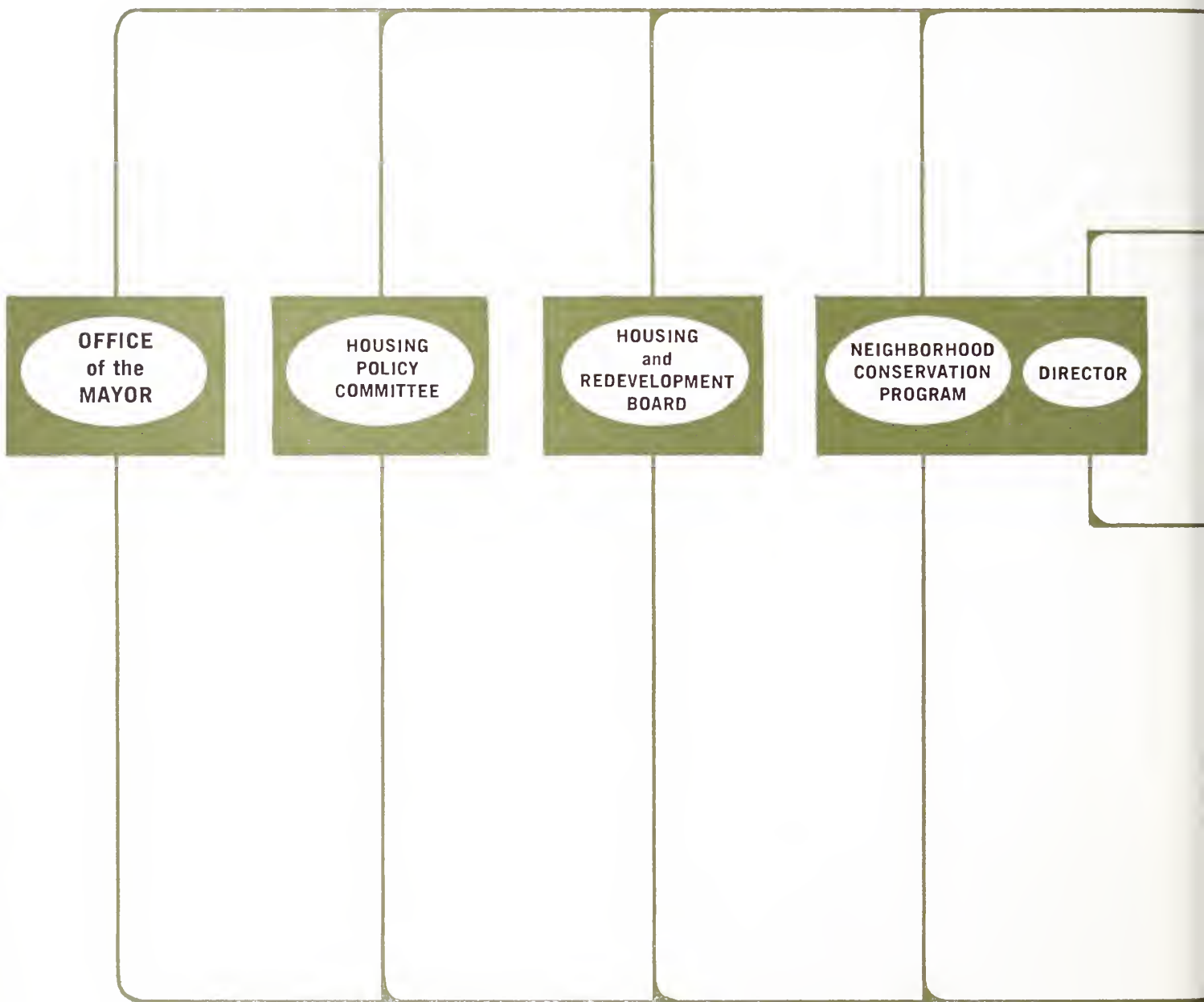
Helping in relocation was staff of the Department of Relocation, the Welfare Department and the Housing Authority. Upgrading buildings beyond code compliance involved other divisions of the Housing and Redevelopment Board, and personnel from the Housing Authority, Department of Real Estate and Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency, private financial institutions, as well as the Program's real estate advisory service. Improving the general physical environment of the neighborhood was a joint task of the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, Sanitation Department, Department of Highways, Department of Air Pollution Control, Parks Department, Traffic Department, Department of Real Estate, Board of Education and Planning Commission.

Bringing about positive changes in the social environment involved activities on the part of the Police Department, including its specialized divisions such as the narcotics and vice squads and the Juvenile Aid Bureau. It also encompassed the initiation of programs on the part of the Youth Board, Commission on Human Rights, Department of Welfare, Board of Education, Board of Higher Education, Department of Health, Community Mental Health Board, Department of Hospitals, Parks Department, Department of Markets, New York State Department of Labor, the New York City Department of Labor, Job Orientation in Neighborhoods and the Public Library, to say nothing of the many private health, educational, welfare and recreational agencies cooperating in this aspect of the venture.

In addition to the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency, the Office of the Mayor, other divisions of the Housing and Redevelopment Board, the City Planning Commission, the Bureau of the Budget, the Office of the Comptroller, the Tax Department, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Purchase, the Department of Public Events, the Rent and Rehabilitation Administration and the City Administrator's Office are involved in one way or another with either the overall administration of the Program or in providing it with information and services. In special relation to Conservation are the Criminal and Civil Court of the City of New York.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAM



LIAISON—HOUSING

COOPERATING AGENCIES

DEPARTMENTS OF BUILDINGS, HEALTH, SANITATION, FIRE, WATER SUPPLY,
GAS AND ELECTRICITY, HIGHWAYS, AIR POLLUTION CONTROL, REAL ESTATE,
RELOCATION, CITY PLANNING, TRAFFIC, PARKS; HOUSING AUTHORITY,
TRANSIT AUTHORITY, RENT AND REHABILITATION, CORPORATION COUNSEL

POLICY LEVEL OFFICIALS

COMMISSIONERS
CHAIRMEN
ADMINISTRATORS
BOARD MEMBERS
DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS
Etc.

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

BUREAU CHIEFS
BOROUGH CHIEFS
DIVISION DIRECTORS
SUPERINTENDENTS
CHIEF INSPECTORS
Etc.

FIELD PERSONNEL

SUPERVISORS
ASSISTANT SUPERVISORS
INSPECTORS
RELOCATION MANAGERS
SANITARIANS
FIELD PATROLMEN
LOCAL RENT DIRECTORS
FIELD REPRESENTATIVES
REAL ESTATE MANAGERS
Etc.

HOUSING DIVISION

DISTRICT OFFICES

SOCIAL DIVISION

LIAISON—SOCIAL

COOPERATING AGENCIES

DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH, HOSPITALS, WELFARE, MARKETS, LABOR, PARKS;
POLICE DEPARTMENT, YOUTH BOARD, COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS,
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD, BOARD OF EDUCATION,
JOIN, HOUSING AUTHORITY

POLICY LEVEL OFFICIALS

COMMISSIONERS
CHAIRMEN
ADMINISTRATORS
BOARD MEMBERS
DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS
Etc.

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

BUREAU CHIEFS
BOROUGH CHIEFS
DIVISION DIRECTORS
SUPERINTENDENTS
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS
Etc.

FIELD PERSONNEL

CAPTAINS
PATROLMEN
STREET CLUB WORKERS
INTERGROUP REPRESENTATIVES
DOCTORS
NURSES
PSYCHIATRISTS
PRINCIPALS
TEACHERS
SOCIAL INVESTIGATORS
COUNSELLORS
INSPECTORS
RECREATION SPECIALISTS
Etc.

The overriding task of the Conservation Program was to make this seemingly awesome governmental apparatus work effectively, efficiently and humanely on a neighborhood level. As a first step, this required the opening of site offices in each district. Whether located in buildings housing one of the sponsors, storefronts or other structures in the areas, site offices gave visible proof to residents that Conservation was a physical and psychological part of the neighborhood.

The next step in the localization of public and private resources involved the recruitment of professional staff to man the site office.¹⁶ Typically, district staff was composed of a director, an assistant director, a community organizer, and a stenographer.¹⁷ Whatever the manning pattern of a particular district, its housing, social action and community organization functions were divided to maximize staff strengths. In all cases, the director had the overriding responsibility of meshing neighborhood needs with available resources, all within the context of public policies and procedures and community goals.¹⁸

Organization of the project was also structured to allow the staff to deal on a direct basis with property owners, lessees, agents, superintendents, residents, community leaders, employees of agencies and institutions and local businessmen. Similarly, the arrangement was such that the staff had a continuing and close relationship with members of their sponsoring bodies, personnel of other districts and members of the Program's central staff. In the latter case, relationships were consultative rather than supervisory, though this distinction tended to be blurred by districts, over time and in the substantive aspects of the work.

As a next organizational step, a liaison system was arranged between the Program and various municipal agencies. To establish effective relationships, the Mayor asked and received pledges of cooperation from the heads of agencies at the start of the project.¹⁹ As each district was launched, middle and field level personnel of cooperating agencies met with district staff to learn about the Program's goals, establish relevant policies and procedures, review problems of mutual concern and gain a better understanding of the neighborhoods in which they would be working.

Staff of the districts have since met with assigned personnel of cooperating agencies on a regular basis. Either at monthly or special meetings, problems were



Conservation staffs of west side districts meet to discuss mutual problems

reviewed, information exchanged and areas of responsibility delineated. Interagency meetings were usually divided into "building" and "people centered" groupings in order to facilitate the functional nature of the work of the agencies. In these sessions, Conservation personnel acted as a conduit for the transmission of information among the agencies and between them and the community.

These and other devices provided the broad context for the functional, though not the administrative decentralization of municipal services in Conservation districts.²⁰ Equally important was the close rapport established between departmental and project personnel. On the neighborhood level this involved, say, the selection of a target building by the district director, to which the building inspector was assigned to carry out a cellar-to-roof inspection. If a policy or procedural problem arose during the course of the inspectional activities, the district director attempted to



Chelsea staff member performs "information center" role of the program

resolve the issue with the inspector or his immediate supervisor, oftentimes relying on the guidance of central staff or the experience of other districts faced with similar situations. In cases where the problem impinged on more than one agency, their field level representatives were called together by the district office and charged with providing solutions compatible with the project's and the departments' objectives.

Failing solutions at this level, district directors called upon appropriate personnel of central staff—which is divided into Housing, Social Action and Planning, Research and Training Divisions²¹—to take appropriate action. This usually entailed conversations with their counterparts on the middle management level of cooperating agencies.²² Especially where problems were germane to more than one district, personnel of central staff arranged conferences or took

other actions to arrive at mutually acceptable solutions.²³ In some cases, the problems or issues which confronted the Program required action by the deputy commissioner or commissioner of a particular department. Here, liaison was handled by the director of the Program, who took responsibility for the overall direction and coordination of the districts through policy and administrative actions, including regularly scheduled meetings between central and district staff. In other cases, the director had recourse to the top echelon of municipal government, including the Housing and Redevelopment Board, the Housing Policy Board, and where needed, the Mayor.²⁴

This was, of course, the formal administrative structure of the Program. Less formally, and oftentimes more effectively, strict adherence to regular procedures and lines of authority and responsibility were

disregarded. In one district, for instance, a secretary dealt directly with a deputy commissioner to resolve a problem affecting the development of the neighborhood. This flexible approach allowed the Program to recognize the efficacy of personal relations and the strength of the informal power structure in obtaining results; it acted on this knowledge to benefit its work.

The formal and informal structures were important. Perhaps more important was the attachment to the districts on a continuing basis of field personnel of municipal departments. This localization of municipal services resulted in the creation of what has been called a "department store" of City services. Directed and coordinated by the district director—in effect a local "mayor"—it provided the vehicle for bringing more efficient, effective and humane government to "grey" areas. Residents no longer needed to "go fight city hall;" it was right down the street. Conversely, "city hall" knew what was needed because it was centered in the neighborhood. Thus, the Neighborhood Conservation Program was organized to bridge the gap between the decline of the old line political club—which generally provided humane but corrupt government—and the rise of the centralized City bureaucracy—which generally gave efficient but impersonal government—by taking the best of both. Commenting on this arrangement after four and one half years of operation in Chelsea, the Citizen's Housing and Planning Council made the following observations:

The conservation district director—"Local Mayor" confers with his assistants in Chelsea

"Both as a stated purpose, as well as a clearly distinguishable result of conservation is to put people in better touch with municipal services of all kinds and to make city departments more responsive to the physical and social needs of the local area. This is done essentially by the intervention of Conservation staff into the ineffective and frustrating system of communication between the average citizen and his municipal government in a city the size of New York. Staff invites complaints, channels them to the right department, sees that the department responds, insures follow-up of the problem later on, etc. etc. The main question about this device is whether it is dependent upon the continued presence of the staff or whether a system of communication becomes established between the neighborhood and the complex municipal government which can continue to function with decreased intervention by special staff.

If . . . the foregoing purposes could be hypothetically stripped away from an established conservation office, we would find that it had assumed another clear and well-developed role in the neighborhood as an information center. This, of course, is intertwined with conservation's function as an administrative device. But it is more than that. In a large, lonely, complicated city, the society cannot provide the personal support in myriad forms that a small town does. People need bits of information, advice, reassurance, solace. When this is not available from family, relatives, friends or neighbors, the "open door" of the Conservation office beckons. Multiplied as these simple needs are in dense city neighborhoods, meeting them can become a busy, full-time job in itself."



Starting The Districts

When the districts had met sponsorship, financing and planning standards, chosen staff, opened site offices and established administrative procedures, they turned their attention to the selection of demonstration blocks in which to start their efforts. Either square blocks or social streets, they had the merit of allowing the districts to concentrate available resources in a relatively small area. Since these usually had the most severe problems in the districts, they were also chosen with the thought in mind that if these could be upgraded, Conservation would have a contagious effect in the remaining portions of the neighborhood. It was in this context that Chelsea chose the 400 block on West 22nd Street—"Little Korea"—to launch its drive. Bloomingdale picked West 103rd Street—or the "Jungle Street"—to start its project. Carnegie Hill selected 98th Street between Madison and Park, and Hudson began in the district's three most problem ridden, high-rise buildings. Neither East Harlem, Morningside nor Hamilton-Grange had blocks that were particularly bad in comparison to others in the districts; they, therefore, chose blocks on the periphery of their districts to begin their campaigns. After substantially completing the demonstration streets, the districts moved to the next most serious block in the district or to problem buildings scattered throughout the neighborhood.

Alerting The Neighborhood

For the Program to succeed, it was essential for neighborhood residents to understand its purposes and procedures. Without this understanding, anxieties and fears which accompany the initiation of any housing program could develop and might easily have jeopardized the conduct and outcome of the project. Similarly, Conservation could not enlist the aid and support of residents in the improvement task if information was withheld about the role and stake of ordinary citizens in the venture. Acting on this premise, and after the selection of the pilot blocks, each district initiated an information program to acquaint residents with the goals and methods of the Program and keep them abreast of its progress.

In this connection, widespread publicity was given to the launching of each district in the metropolitan and local press and other media of mass communications. Community organizations and other groupings were contacted by local staff, who explained the project in detail. Leaflets were distributed to pilot block residents; they noted the goals and methods of the venture and invited residents to come to the site office to receive a more detailed explanation of the project. In Chelsea, as a further example, a staff member was assigned to contact residents and explain the project on a door-to-door, floor-to-floor basis.²⁵ Hamilton-

Interagency cooperation is spurred at a routine meeting of field-level personnel in East Harlem



Grange took the additional step of placing informational posters in its pilot buildings.

East Harlem's approach included the systematic interviewing of pilot block residents. Social workers at first conducted non-structured interviews to determine the attitudes of local residents towards the Program. At the same time, they explained the effort and sought to allay anxieties that the project meant more public housing for the area, with a consequent displacement of long-time residents. When the Program was started, a leaflet in Italian, English and Spanish was distributed to residents, after which structured interviews were carried out with tenants. East Harlem, through its membership in the East Harlem Community Council and its contacts with voluntary social, health and welfare agencies centered in the community, was also particularly active in providing pertinent information about the campaign to the area's private social agencies and, through them, to district residents.

To keep residents abreast of progress, districts have utilized news-letters, feature articles in the local and metropolitan press, and conducted conferences, meetings and other forums in the neighborhoods. More important was the day-to-day transmission of information as district staff acted on complaints and undertook programs of tenant assistance, education and organization. Still other contacts with the community were made through volunteer efforts and fund raising campaigns.²⁶

It was equally essential for district property owners to understand the Program's means and ends. Without it, landlords might have vigorously, if unsuccessfully, opposed the code enforcement campaign and failed to cooperate in building upgrading ventures. Like residents, property owners had to be taken into the Program's full confidence. The orientation and results varied with each district:

Prior to starting its program, East Harlem's staff met to decide on the best means of acquainting property owners with Conservation plans. A consensus was reached that, at least initially, individual contacts would be the most productive since these might allow staff to assess each landlord's economic and social stake in the neighborhood and his attitude towards the effort, as well as allow the local office to organize a group meeting of pilot block property owners immediately prior to the official launching of the project. These

contacts also gave staff members the opportunity to appeal for support from a particular landlord either on the basis of economic advantage or civic pride. Finally, it enabled them to further counteract anxieties about the purposes of the program and also identified some leadership elements in the neighborhood.²⁷

Morningside and Carnegie Hill adopted a different approach. Relatively small, both invited all of their landlords to meetings held at City Hall. At the Morningside session, an explanation was given of Conservation and the Morningside General Neighborhood Renewal Plan Area Program, the latter being of potential value to the district's property owners. Composed principally of the individuals who had successfully defeated plans for a middle-income housing project in the district, the Morningside group appeared to be enthusiastic about the Program's prospects, though many had misgivings about the availability of mortgage money to carry out improvements.

The Carnegie Hill meeting was not harmonious. It was evident after the Program was explained that one group of landlords was diametrically opposed to the project. On impression, the dissident group appeared to be composed of owners with holdings east of Madison Avenue, the deteriorating segment of the district. They were clearly against a rigorous code enforcement campaign, placing almost all of the blame for appalling housing conditions on tenants. Their major spokesman questioned the City's and the sponsors' motives in initiating the effort; prior to the meeting, he had sought a staff position with the project. Subsequently, he asked at least one of the sponsoring institutions to withdraw from sponsorship; failing this, he organized a group of landlords who opposed the designation of the neighborhood as a non-assisted urban renewal area before the City Planning Commission.

Chelsea and Bloomingdale also requested central staff to summon their pilot block landlords to meetings held at City Hall or the Department of Buildings. At each meeting, all aspects of the Program were explained. The reaction of the property owners was mixed: some were skeptical; some were hostile; others were confused; few were enthusiastic. In contrast, were the last districts to be started, Hudson and Hamilton-Grange. Their meetings were amicable almost to the point of disbelief, a situation that was perhaps due to the Program's growing reputation for both fairness and

severity in code enforcement matters. As the districts have moved to new pilot blocks, or expanded in size, property owners have usually been apprised of relevant aspects of the Program on an individual basis.

Last Steps

Almost simultaneously with the property owner meetings, individual "profiles" for pilot buildings were developed. The Buildings Department provided information on building classification and ownership, as well as the number of pending code violations. Rent data was utilized to gain knowledge about the maximum legal rents which the owner could charge for each unit and, thus, information on gross income. Tax Department data revealed information about the size and depth of the building and lot, the number of stories of the structure, and the assessed valuation of the building and land for the years 1940, 1950 and 1960. Other sources provided information about property transfers between 1940 and 1961, including the name and address of the buyer and seller, the cash considerations involved and the mortgages in force. All of the data and information were then transferred to

master profiles, a copy of which was kept in the districts.

This effort was designated to fulfill a number of purposes. It allowed district staff to become somewhat conversant with the financial position of the owners, a most helpful asset in negotiating property improvements. It also enabled the Program, when prosecuting recalcitrant landlords, to present to the courts a detailed picture of the landlord's real ability to comply with housing laws.²⁸ With the availability of 1960 census materials, Hamilton-Grange took the additional step of preparing comprehensive profiles of its neighborhood. The information garnered provided important insights into the demographic, housing and social conditions of the district and suggested a number of immediate problem areas to which staff members directed their attention.

With the various elements in their place, the Neighborhood Conservation Program set out to reclaim Chelsea, Bloomingdale, East Harlem, Morningside, Carnegie Hill, Hamilton-Grange and Hudson. Its successes and failures are detailed in the remainder of this report.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Another viewpoint, reinforced by the experience of the Area Services offices, is that many neighborhood residents are equally distrustful of private agencies and institutions, especially those that have no real identification with minority group members. The key to success in neighborhood improvement efforts is dependent in this view, less on public or private sponsorship than on the quality of the personnel assigned to the local office.

² The impetus for the Morningside Conservation District also came from Negro leaders, some of whom were indignant about the possibility of Harlem being left out of the Program.

³ For a number of years, C.S.S. provided casework and public health nursing services to East Harlem residents from its East River office. It also worked with the Housing Authority in relocating multi-problem families from the site of Jefferson Houses, which is adjacent to the Conservation District.

⁴ Conservation appears to be one of the most politically attractive forms of urban renewal, as evidenced by the relatively favorable support given to the Program in all districts by both regular and reform Democrats, Republicans and Liberals. The motivation here apparently stems from the fact that, in gaining Conservation, political clubs can exercise their traditional role of bringing municipal services to bear on neighborhood problems, thereby effecting positive change without dislocating a sizable segment of their constituencies. On the other hand, and to the extent that the Program is successful, one of the rationales for the existence of local political clubs—solving local problems—is removed, thereby threatening one of the clubs' roles.

⁵ To insure that sponsorship is representative, the Program now requires multiple sponsorship. The two Conservation Districts to be established in 1964, Crown Heights and Prospect Heights, are being required to leave half of the places on their Board of Trustees vacant so that indigenous, non-affiliated leaders may be added to their Boards as the Program progresses.

⁶ Subsequently, the sponsors formed a non-profit corporation to oversee the project and adopted by-laws to cover its policies and procedures. A tax-exempt organization, the Carnegie Hill Neighborhood Projects acts as monetary agent for the program, hires and gives general direction to professional staff and passes on all policy questions affecting its Conservation Program. Selecting a thirty-five person Board of Directors, the project has developed some of its powers to a five-member steering committee, which is in close and continuing contact with professional staff.

⁷ The President of City College—which is an integral part of the University of the City of New York—the Deans of Administration and the School of Architecture, and the Director of the Institute for Community Research and Development serve on the Board.

⁸ The majority of the funds allocated were used to establish Area Services Projects. This was also true of the \$818,955 allocated to the Program for fiscal 1962-1963; the \$840,000 granted for 1963-1964; and the \$1,450,000 for 1964-1965.

⁹ Sponsors of housing in the first stages of the multi-million dollar West Side Urban Renewal Project tentatively agreed in March, 1961 to contribute about \$2,000 apiece to Hudson after their formal designations as developers. At that time, they looked on the contributions as a sound community investment and a necessary safeguard for their projected expenditures in the urban renewal area; Hudson lies immediately to the west of the project.

¹⁰ What the actual cost to the City is of employing inspectors and other personnel on a permanent rather than an *ad hoc* basis in a neighborhood has not been determined by the Program and it may be impossible to do so because of the complex variables involved in such a determination. In any event, it is not thought to be high and may even be completely offset by the added efficiency of municipal personnel in Conservation Districts. Moreover, added costs to the City are minimized by increased revenues resulting from increased assessed valuations of property in Conservation Districts; savings to the Welfare Department in rents as the result of relocation or due to social rehabilitation; and, after the Program has met successes in a district, a reduction of municipal services. There is also, of course, a social savings to the City accruing from the improvements made in the neighborhoods. Whatever the cost of Conservation, it is almost infinitesimal when compared to the monies that would have to be expended for major clearance and renewal efforts as a result of the blight that would have occurred in the absence of the Program. This last assertion cannot be proved, but is certainly indicated by the content of this report.

¹¹ The arrangement had disadvantages too. Land assembly and write-down techniques, the provision of resources for community facilities and the development and execution of specific moderate and major rehabilitation and redevelopment plans were denied to the Program, except insofar as those could be obtained on a voluntary basis or through municipal action.

¹² Chelsea's original northern boundary was the south side of West 22nd Street; its expansion to the south side of West 25th Street allowed the district to become a viable entity, which was also true of Bloomingdale when its boundaries were redrawn to include the north side of West 96th Street.

¹³ In essence, the degree of housing deterioration, and the related presence of a high proportion of old-law tenements in the three districts presented problems which were beyond the ability of the Program to resolve. To correct this in the future selection of Conservation Districts, the Housing and Redevelopment Board reached an agreement in May, 1964 with the Regional Office of the Housing and Home Finance Agency that for a neighborhood to qualify for non-assisted Conservation treatment: (1) at least 90 percent of the housing units in an area had to be rated sound in the 1960 census or, as a result of interim trends, were likely to be rated as such at the time of selection; (2) no more than 10 percent of an area's housing units could be contained in old-law tenements; and (3) social problems as rated by the Youth Board could not be substantially higher than relevant borough averages. Not meeting these standards, East Harlem, Carnegie Hill and Hamilton-Grange will be converted to Area Services Districts by July 1, 1965.

¹⁴ This was the case with the two most recently designated districts, Prospect Heights and Crown Heights in Brooklyn (July, 1964). Conservation areas are now announced as an integral part of the city's yearly urban renewal program and selected in keeping with the criteria enunciated in the text and footnotes of this section of this report.

¹⁵ While the seven Conservation Districts had little or no impact on the manpower resources of cooperating departments, the addition of nine Area Services Districts did, as will the addition of two new Conservation and eleven Area Services Districts in fiscal 1964-1965. The impact has been offset either through the more rational utilization of manpower; the allocation of additional expense budget funds to cooperating departments; or, in the case of the five rehabilitation areas a specific allocation of funds for manpower purposes.

¹⁶ The sponsoring bodies actually employ professional and clerical staff and set conditions of employment. Central staff has been active in recruiting and screening personnel for the sponsors.

¹⁷ Overall, the districts employed 21 individuals in professional capacities as of December, 1963. Of these, ten were graduate social workers, seven had backgrounds in social action or community organization programs, two were attorneys and one was a sociologist. Generalists rather than specialists, the prior work experience of staff was extremely varied. The average age of the incumbents was thirty. The number of school years completed eighteen. Most were from middle class backgrounds; the vast majority members of minority groups. In terms of personality configurations, moral indignation was perhaps the closest appellation that could be applied.

¹⁸ Manpower shortages have had serious and far-reaching effects on the work of the districts. To counter this, the Program cooperated with schools of social work to recruit and place social work students in the districts, utilized housing trainees assigned to the Housing and Redevelopment Board and volunteers from Associated Community Teams, various college and university citizenship programs and the Peace Corps.

¹⁹ Under Chapter 50, Section 1134, subsection C of the City's new Charter, the power of the program to coordinate municipal agencies and officials was made explicit.

²⁰ There was no attempt to change the jurisdictional lines of cooperating municipal agencies to coincide with boundaries of the districts. Localization rather than decentralization was the key to the administration of public service in the districts. The two are, of course, not incompatible and, in the view of most staff members, localization should lead in a logical manner to the decentralization of City services. This would be in keeping with the Citizens Union recommendation that district lines should be rationalized and field offices of departments housed in one or a grouping of buildings. As explained by the Citizen's Union Research Foundation in *COMMUNITY ADMINISTRATION WITHIN NEW YORK CITY*, the administrative centers would serve residents of the City's 70 odd communities, which must be delineated by the Planning Commission before 1968. These units would invite citizen participation through membership on local planning boards.

²¹ After reorganization in September, 1962, central staff consisted of the director of the program, two attorneys (Housing Division), two social

workers (Social Action Division), and three social scientists (Planning, Research and Training Division) and, of course, administrative and clerical personnel.

²² Because of the growth and increasing complexity of the Program, policies, practices and procedures in effect between Conservation and cooperating agencies are being codified in a manual of operations. A detailed guide to the reality situations of governmental operations on a neighborhood level, the manual has been helpful in solving ambiguities faced by the Program; rationalizing the operations of the districts; providing a vehicle for negotiating needed operational changes; serving as a training aid for new staff members; and smoothing the transition from a charismatic to a bureaucratic operation, in Max Weber's use of these terms.

²³ Under the guidance of the director, members of the central staff also assist the districts by providing pertinent housing and social action information; give counsel on particular problems, expedite requests for action directed towards cooperating agencies; undertake legal and legislative projects; and provide physical planning and other technical skills to district staff.

²⁴ Of special importance in gaining results was the fact that until April, 1962 the director of the Program was also Assistant to the Mayor for Housing; the central office of the program was physically divorced from other divisions of the Housing and Redevelopment Board; and central staff communicated with cooperating departments through the City Hall switchboard. These devices served to emphasize the Mayor's backing of the Program and undoubtedly elicited cooperation and action that would not be forthcoming if the Program had been perceived as simply a unit of another City agency. When all three of the above factors were changed in April, 1962, appreciable changes in cooperation by City departments were noticed. On the other hand, the problems that have arisen may perhaps be related more to the rapid growth of the Program than to the absence of the previous symbols and facts of authority. Generalizations are difficult since cooperation has varied over time, by departments, by functional and geographical units within agencies, by individual officials, as well as by the Program's status and leadership.

²⁵ This approach in Chelsea was necessitated because of fear on the part of residents that Conservation meant demolition and mass relocation or, at best, was a thinly disguised attempt to displace Puerto Ricans from the neighborhood. Some Puerto Rican and other organizations actively opposed the project, believing it to be supported by a minority of residents who had a vested interest in creating luxury housing from which, by reason of income and prejudice, Puerto Ricans would be excluded. The door-to-door canvass was designed to counteract these misapprehensions. After some months, it proved reasonably successful.

²⁶ In general, this campaign did much to alert residents to the Program. Nonetheless, two years after the project was started a significant number of residents did not even know that they lived in a Conservation District, much less what the Program was designed to accomplish. This was not surprising in neighborhoods in which there was a significant incidence of apathy, as measured by participation in elections.

²⁷ Keeping to this format, staff interviewed fifty-two of the pilot blocks' sixty property owners during March and April, 1960. The majority responded positively, though voicing complaints about municipal services, the housekeeping practices of tenants and the deterioration of the neighborhood. In the interviews, some appeared to be disillusioned about the prospects of upgrading the area and were frankly skeptical about the success of the Program. At the group meeting, 31 landlords were in attendance and given specific information about Conservation. Assured of the project's good faith, it was their feeling that it "was highly desirable" and worth "giving a try."

²⁸ When coupled with information about code violations and compliance, overcrowding, Court and Rent and Rehabilitation Administration proceedings and upgrading efforts, it is hoped that this material can be used for quantitative analytical purposes of major significance to the Program, New York City and other urban areas of the nation.

One of the major objectives of the Program was that of reversing physical deterioration in "grey" areas. To achieve this goal, it undertook four major efforts. The first was that of the rigorous application and enforcement of state and municipal laws and codes governing the maintenance of existing housing. The second was directed towards the decongestion of overcrowded buildings and, thus, neighborhoods and the humane and efficient relocation of overcrowded families to safe, sound and sanitary apartments. The third concerned itself with measures designed to induce property owners to undertake improvements in their buildings over and beyond code requirements. The fourth was aimed at improving the general physical environment of neighborhoods undergoing Conservation treatment.



2

Improving the Physical Environment

Chapter 4 **ENFORCING CODES**

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Chapter 4

ENFORCING CODES

Introduction

The rigorous application and enforcement of state and municipal laws and codes governing the maintenance of existing housing theoretically provided the Program with a means of arresting and perhaps reversing physical decay in Neighborhood Conservation Districts. They set at least minimum standards of soundness, safety and decency to which all buildings should be brought and from which none should be allowed to fall. Their enforcement by housing inspectional agencies, in cooperation with district staff, allowed the Program to marshal public and private resources in this attempt to redress adverse housing trends in the seven neighborhoods selected for the experimental project.

Code Enforcement: The Process

Immediately prior to the launching of a district, the five housing inspectional departments—Buildings, Health, Fire, Sanitation and Water Supply, Gas and Electricity—detailed inspectors to work on a continuing basis in the Conservation neighborhood.¹ Before starting their duties, inspectional personnel received information about the goals and methods of the Program. When work actually began, they met with district staff in the site office, learning in greater detail about the particular neighborhood in which they would be active. Also at this time, staff informed the inspectors of requirements previously agreed to by the cooperating departments, among which were: the filing of copies of code violations in the district office; the need to inspect at least 80 percent of the units in multiple dwellings before inspections were considered complete; the high qualitative level of inspectional work expected in the districts; and the special inter-agency policy and procedural agreements which regulated the course of inspections in any given neighborhood. Following this, and after utilizing information gained from community leaders or through housing surveys, staff and inspectors jointly targeted specific

blocks and buildings for initial code enforcement treatment, after which each department began its inspections.

The Housing Division of the Department of Buildings assigned at least one inspector on a full-time basis to each district. Enforcing the Multiple Dwelling Law and Code, the inspector was asked to conduct a thorough inspection of target buildings. This involved inspections of individual dwelling units, as well as public halls, areaways, cellars and roofs. In general, the inspector looked for code violations covering building maintenance, illegal occupancy and overcrowding, certifications of occupancy, illegal alterations, impediments to egress, unlawful cooking space, sanitary facilities and structural defects. In carrying out this assignment, he informed other inspectional departments of code violations which came to his attention, receiving from them similar complaints which he investigated. The building inspector also checked the individual complaints of tenants, many of which were reported at the district's site office.²

One sanitarian from the Department of Health was assigned to each district, his duties entailing a commitment of about 75 percent of his work week in buildings selected for code enforcement. Inspecting for such conditions as lack of heat and hot water, escaping gas, rodent infestation, water leaks, and holes and openings in walls, floors and ceilings, the Health inspector enforced relevant sections of the New York City Health Code. Like his Buildings counterpart, he inspected public areas and private dwelling units in buildings and received and acted on complaints brought to his attention by personnel of sister departments, residents and Conservation staff. Sanitarians also carried out inspections of retail food establishments located in the districts and undertook environmental health education campaign.³

Inspecting for violations of relevant sections of the Multiple Dwelling Law and Code and the Administrative Code, an electrical inspector was attached to

Footnotes for this chapter are on page 95.



Code enforcement coupled with tenant education programs brought about improvements in living conditions in one of Bloomingdale's hotels.



each district on a sporadic basis by the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity. Visiting both public and private areas of residential structures, and looking for inadequate, broken or defective wiring, cables and fixtures, the electrical inspector was asked to coordinate his inspections with those of the other inspectors, which was true of his departmental counterparts concerned with adverse water supply situations.

Fire and Sanitation Department inspections are generally limited to public areas and the surrounding land of the buildings. Because of this, both agencies had little trouble in gaining access to the areas in which they work, an impediment felt by the other three inspectional agencies. The Engine or Hook and Ladder Company servicing a district could cover an entire block in a day. Sanitation patrolmen usually, though not always, range over an area larger than the neighborhood undergoing treatment, repeating Conservation inspections as indicated by the cleanliness of the neighborhood and the objectives of district staff. They were, therefore, detailed to Neighborhood Conservation Districts only as required.

Acting in its fire prevention capacity, the Fire Department enforced the Fire Prevention Code of the Administrative Code, giving particular attention to the presence of combustible materials or the absence or disrepair of fire escapes, sprinkler systems and other fire prevention devices. Since it has concurrent jurisdiction with the Buildings Department over many provisions of the Multiple Dwelling Code, it also enforced these standards. Sanitation patrolmen of the Field Inspection Forces of the Sanitation Department inspected for littering, improper garbage disposal, dirty lots and backyards, and other sanitary hazards covered by the New York City Health Code.

After the inspectional force was marshalled, landlords and tenants were notified of their impending visits and asked to provide access to their buildings or apartments. Following initial inspections, property owners received a copy of the violations that were found and were requested to arrange an appointment with district staff to discuss their removal. At these meetings, inspectors were usually available to help show landlords how to comply with relevant laws and codes. Additional help was provided by the Program's real estate consultants.

In keeping with its tenet that property owners

"are good until proven otherwise," no action was taken by the Program to compel compliance until reinspections had taken place; a thirty-day period usually elapsed before reinspections were ordered. This time period was generally sufficient for all violations to be completely or substantially removed. Additional time was granted in cases where staff and inspectors were convinced that the owner was showing good faith and would make a concerted effort to fulfill his obligations. In the only exception to this approach, a beginning had to be made in removing hazardous violations immediately after they had been uncovered; they had to be removed within a reasonable time thereafter. Otherwise, staff recommended that the inspectional agency having jurisdiction immediately apply the full force of its laws.

A variety of sanctions were used to compel recalcitrant landlords to bring their properties up to safe, sound and sanitary conditions. Periodic reinspections were employed to check on code compliance, as well as to prod owners into taking the indicated remedial action. Information supplied to the community, peer group and local and metropolitan newspapers was used to bring public opinion to bear against balking property owners.

Among other remedies were court proceedings and actions to reduce rents. In the former, central and district staff and the housing inspectional services worked with the Penalties Division of the Office of the Corporation Counsel to show the Court the extent and seriousness of the violations, particularly by documenting their previous attempt to gain cooperation from the property owner. In appearances before various parts of the Criminal Court, Corporation Counsel was asked to request maximum fines and jail sentences in Conservation District cases. Prior to sentencing, the Court allowed counsel to the Program to address the bench, an arrangement which served to emphasize the importance of the particular case to the work of the individual district and the total Program.

Similarly, actions to reduce rents before the Rent and Rehabilitation Administration represented a determination that a given property owner had refused to meet his obligations to maintain his property in a generally good condition. Accordingly, maximum reductions were requested; in appropriate cases, rents in rent-controlled buildings were reduced by as much

as 50 percent and in some cases to a \$1.00 a month a unit. In these proceedings, the Departments of Buildings and Health certify that the violations are hazardous, which allows the Rent and Rehabilitation Administration Agency to impose these near ultimate economic sanctions.

In a relatively new development, the Program worked with the Department of Welfare to help insure that public assistance recipients were housed in buildings free of hazardous violations. This entailed placing some properties on a list to which Welfare recipients would not be referred. Given turnover—and the inability of some owners to attract tenants not receiving public assistance—this action oftentimes resulted in substantial economic losses to recalcitrant owners until the violations were corrected. The Program also assisted the Department of Welfare in enforcing the recently enacted Spiegel Law, which allows the agency to withhold the rents of its clients in situations where hazardous code violations exist.

During the last year covered by this report, the Program began to work with the Buildings Department to initiate receivership actions in buildings that

had been physically or psychologically abandoned by their owners, one consequence of which was that effective remedial action was not likely to be forthcoming. Under this measure, the Department of Buildings starts the receivership actions; when granted by the Supreme Court, the Department of Real Estate serves as the receiver. Funds for the repair and maintenance of the building are provided by the City from a revolving fund and recouped from rents as a prior lien on the property.

To counteract really deplorable housing conditions, the Program also utilized the Department of Health's ability to vacate buildings detrimental to the life, health and safety of its residents, and the Department of Buildings' power to vacate structurally unsound or unsafe multiple dwellings. In each instance, provisions were made for the continuation of rent control and the relocation of tenants, arrangements which were also in force when buildings were vacated by the Fire Department following fires or by the Department

Hazardous violations were quickly brought to the attention of the proper inspection agency



of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity when it found it necessary to discontinue utilities. Finally, the most far-reaching code enforcement tactic open to the Program was that of organizing tenants, thereby enabling them to deal on a responsible and relatively fearless basis with property owners.⁴

Inherent in all of these arrangements was the attempt to devise a coordinated and comprehensive approach to code enforcement matters; provide district and central staff with controls at key points in the enforcement continuum; and use relevant laws and codes not simply as punitive devices but as a means of promoting better housing conditions.

Code Enforcement: The Product

Using this approach, a total of 8,351 housing units in the seven districts had been inspected and reinspected at least once by the two most important inspectional departments, Buildings and Health, as of December, 1962. Table 4 reveals that 15,022 violations of the codes of the two departments were found, of which 12,958 were removed, for a code compliance

rate of 86.3 percent. Over 2,000 violations were issued by the Fire Department, 95 percent of which were removed voluntarily or as the result of the initiation of summary actions. Violations issued by the Department of Sanitation averaged ten a week a district from July, 1960 to December, 1962.⁵

Because of the recent transition to an electronic data processing system on the part of the Buildings Department, it was impossible to bring compliance data forward to December, 1963. Nonetheless, it appears that approximately 7,000 additional housing units have undergone inspectional treatment during the last twelve months, with the same general levels of compliance. Totally, this means that approximately one third of all the housing units in the seven districts have been inspected since the start of the Program. More important, almost all of the deteriorating or deteriorated units have received at least initial inspectional treatment and most have undergone reinspections, with the exception of substandard units located in the expanded segments of East Harlem and Hamilton-Grange, and those not yet reached in the newest and largest district, Hudson.

TABLE 4
SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTS OF BUILDINGS AND HEALTH INSPECTIONS
NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
August, 1959-December, 1962

DISTRICT	No. Units Inspected	No. Violations 1st Inspection	Additional Violations	Total Violations	Violations Removed	Violations Outstanding	Rate of Compliance (%)
Bloomingdale	1,798	2,924	319	3,243	2,821	422	87.0%
Carnegie Hill	1,027	2,866	288	3,154	2,618	536	83.0
Chelsea	1,582	1,485	239	1,724	1,534	190	88.9
East Harlem	1,083	1,652	187	1,839	1,711	128	93.1
Hamilton Grange	1,126	1,514	153	1,667	1,451	216	87.1
Hudson	1,417	1,583	210	1,793	1,416	377	79.0
Morningside	318	1,379	223	1,602	1,407	195	87.8
Total	8,351	13,403	1,619	15,022	12,958	2,064	—

SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAM

86.3%

Code Enforcement: Coverage

Coverage has varied by individual district. The two smallest—Morningside and Carnegie Hill—have carried out comprehensive inspections in all of their buildings. The same holds true in Chelsea and Bloomingdale, with the exception of a number of Class “A” buildings which patently did not need, and were not singled out for inspectional treatment. East Harlem, which began building inspections on a block-by-block basis in April, 1960 has since switched to the treatment of specific target buildings thus obviating comprehensive coverage throughout the district, though meeting community demands for inspectional services. Hudson started and is continuing its systematic coverage of target buildings scattered throughout its neighborhood. As a result, most of the really deteriorated Class “B” dwellings and tenements in its area have received the services of the inspectional force, which is also true of Hamilton-Grange.

In addition to the obvious reason of size, coverage has varied by departments. The Fire Department inspections have been the fastest, followed by Sanitation, Health, Buildings and Water Supply, Gas and Electricity. Especially in Hamilton-Grange, Morningside and East Harlem, coverage was slowed by the inability of inspectors to gain access to apartments. All too often this dictated repeated visits by inspectors and a considerable investment of staff time in alerting tenants to impending inspections. To some extent, this was offset by night and weekend inspections undertaken in some districts by the Health, though not the Buildings Department.⁶

Particularly slowing the rate of coverage was the need in some districts to halt inspections until relocation had been successfully carried out. As explained later in this report, this was done to prevent the buildup of relocation loads which could not be handled before eviction proceedings were consummated. Chelsea, Bloomingdale and Hudson were particularly hard hit by this imperative.

Inhibiting coverage at the outset of the Program was the almost constant need for reinspections to bring some buildings up to acceptable standards. Even with the application of the most stringent penalties, it took seventeen reinspections by Health and Building inspectors to convince one Bloomingdale owner to com-

ply with applicable codes. In contrast, one owner followed Hamilton-Grange inspectors with a crew of workmen, who removed the violations almost as soon as they were placed, which was again in part attributable to the Program's growing reputation for both severity and fairness in code enforcement matters.

Also diminishing the rate of inspections has been the fact that inspectors have not been able to spend all of their time inspecting buildings. Admittedly vital ancillary activities—serving summonses, testifying in court, keeping records—cut down on the amount of time available to them for actual inspectional duties. Crash programs and other assignments outside of Conservation districts had an adverse impact on coverage, as did personnel turnover and the related need to orientate newly-assigned inspectors to the Program's policies, practices and procedures.⁷

Code Enforcement: Compliance

Compliance has also shown a mixed pattern. It has varied at any given time mainly because of the point at which statistical information has been collected, or as the result of the maturity of the Program. In September of 1961 for instance, Bloomingdale's compliance rate was only 54.3 percent, simply because it had just initiated inspections in a number of new target buildings and had not received information on the degree of compliance. Since then, the violations have been corrected but compliance may again be distorted by inspections of new target buildings. In almost any district, then, compliance may reach as high as 95 percent in buildings which have received high and continuing inspectional treatment and may be only 5 percent in dwellings undergoing first inspections and reinspections.

The maturity and image of the Program in any given district also determines the degree of compliance. In its early stages, Chelsea showed little real compliance; currently, almost all of its target buildings are free of major and the vast majority of minor violations, which is also true of Bloomingdale and Morningside. Property owners in Hamilton-Grange, the last district to be started, removed the vast majority of their violations prior to initial inspections; the remainder were cleared following the jailing of the district's one really recalcitrant landlord. Because of other factors, this pat-

tern has not been emulated in East Harlem or Carnegie Hill, though it is apparent in Hudson.

Compliance also varies with departments. It is clear that Fire violations are removed with the greatest alacrity, perhaps because of fears about potential losses in life and property or due to the department's application of relatively quick and severe sanctions. Health and Sanitation Department violations can usually be removed without extensive work and at minimum costs, the reasons why they follow Fire in degree of compliance. To remove violations placed by the Department of Buildings usually requires extensive work and higher costs, hence its position in this ordering of departmental effectiveness. On impression, those placed by the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity seem to be the hardest to remove, not only because of the costs involved in repairing or replacing defective or outmoded wiring systems but perhaps due to the manner in which violations are placed and the fact that the ultimate sanction at the command of the department is that of discontinuing utilities, which certainly hurts tenants more than property owners, especially when the latter are absentee corporate landlords.

That compliance varies with individual inspectors is perhaps best indicated by the Program's periodic need to ask for the reassignment of some inspectors, which conflicts with its overall policy of not rotating assigned personnel. Also on the individual level, some inspectors have not raised their sights to gain a higher qualitative level of inspections.⁸ Still others evidenced prejudice against minority group residents and were oftentimes as punitive as some slumlords in their dealing with tenants. They were in a distinct minority. It should be noted that there has not been even a hint of venality lodged against inspectors during the course of the Program. This was apparently due not only to the checks on their work inherent in the Conservation process but, and more important, to what seems to be the increased self-esteem and sense of purpose that resulted from their work as members of a team in a distinct geographical area.⁹

Almost by definition, the degree and quality of compliance varied by type of ownership. In East Harlem, Bloomingdale, Chelsea and Morningside, violations were almost completely absent in the owner-occupied buildings, though prevalent in those owned





Code enforcement was virtually meaningless in old law tenements treated by the program, as witnessed by the exterior conditions of this building in Carnegie Hill. Only through major and costly rehabilitation could they be brought up to a point where the application of housing codes were effective.

by absentee landlords. The stake of resident owners in maintaining their buildings in good condition is obvious, as is that of responsible corporate landlords. This is less true of economically marginal corporate owners, marginal individual owners, out-and-out slumlords and emotionally disturbed property owners, in about that order.

By building class and to some extent age, compliance is at its worst in old law, early new law, and new law tenements and at its best in brownstones and multiple dwellings. A study conducted by the Women's City Club illustrates the failure of code enforcement in tenements. The 1963 analysis, "MAINTAINING DECENT DWELLINGS," was undertaken in a sample of 50 apartments in five, six story, sixty year old, rent controlled, early new law tenements in the East Harlem Neighborhood Conservation District. In December, 1960, the units had been inspected by the Buildings and Health Departments and later found to be substantially clear of violations. Volunteers from the club—who had been trained by the inspectors—reinspected the tenements two and one-half years later. Totally, they found 1319 violations, 26 percent of which they rated as hazardous. In assessing conditions in the 59 apartments, they found only 27 that could be rated as being in excellent or good condition; the remaining 32 units were in a poor or a very poor condition.

More significant were the findings in 21 apartments in which access had been gained by both the inspectors and the volunteers. In these units, 131 penalty points had been assessed by the two municipal agencies in December, 1960. In May, 1962, 454 points were placed by the volunteers. On the average, 52 percent of the violations found by the volunteers were the same violations found by the inspectors over two years earlier. Moreover, the recurrence rate was almost constant in the apartments rated excellent, good and poor, though differing significantly in the fairly good and very poor apartments.

The experience in all districts suggests that when building decay is advanced, as it is in most old law tenements, the posting and subsequent removal of violations is almost totally meaningless since the same or similar violations simply crop up again in a few days or weeks. This is to be expected, for instance, in cases involving the replacement of broken electrical fixtures when the whole building needed rewiring; of

patching plaster when complete replastering and painting were called for; of repairing radiators when a new heating system was suggested; or, in another example, of placing violations for dirty public hallways when the janitor was a chronic alcoholic. In Carnegie Hill, this led to the observation that in old law tenements:

" . . . only major rehabilitation can bring about conditions under which code enforcement can be used effectively as a tool for maintaining meaningful standards of safety and decency."

Another factor impeding more effective code enforcement has been the continuing inability of the Buildings Department to quickly and efficiently serve property owners with summonses for violations. This inability stems, in part, from antedated, improper and even fraudulent registration, which masks true ownership responsibility. This hampered the issuance of writs, as did elaborate and evasive corporate ownership arrangements and the out-of-city residence of some owners.

The Department's inability to quickly bring recalcitrant owners into court was also an effect of its own manpower shortages. As a result, personal service of summonses on owners who resided outside of the districts was virtually impossible at times. Ignoring unenforceable mailed summonses, a number of owners frustrated enforcement efforts for long periods of time, to the detriment of the entire Conservation effort.

Seriously hindering the Program's code enforcement efforts during the last eighteen months covered in this report was the Building Department's transition from a manual to an electronic system of processing code violations and related data and information. Whether in terms of coverage or compliance, this ill-conceived and badly-executed, though potentially beneficial change resulted in an almost complete loss of control by the Program over the code enforcement process, from the selection of target buildings through to the imposition of sanctions. In turn, and since code enforcement was the cornerstone in the Conservation arch, other aspects of the Program—relocation, building upgrading, tenant assistance, education and organization—were either curtailed or did not reach their true potential. The situation led one director to comment that "if code enforcement was the backbone of the Program, it has been spineless in recent months."¹⁰

TABLE 5
BUILDING CLASSIFICATION
NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, 1964

	BLOOMINGDALE		CARNEGIE HILL		CHELSEA		EAST HARLEM		HAMILTON GRANGE		HUDSON		MORNINGSIDE		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
CLASS A MULTIPLE DWELLINGS:																
Old Law Tenement	62	19	29	33	83	20	393	56	61	47	77	17	16	13	721	32
New Law Tenement	46	14	42	48	10	2	112	16	36	28	93	20	-	-	339	15
Old Law Single Room Occupancy	18	5	-	-	-	-	4	1	1	1	19	4	-	-	42	2
New Law Single Room Occupancy	5	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	2	1	1	17	1
Hereafter Erected Class A	1	-	2	2	5	1	2	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	13	1
Heretofore Erected Existing Class A	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	1	-	-	8	-
Heretofore Converted Class A	59	18	-	-	72	17	74	10	1	1	66	14	6	5	278	11
Hereafter Converted Class A	24	7	1	1	8	2	22	3	-	-	24	5	-	-	79	4
CLASS B MULTIPLE DWELLINGS:																
Heretofore Erected Existing Class B	4	1	-	-	8	2	-	-	-	-	5	1	-	-	17	1
Heretofore Converted Class B	23	7	-	-	175	41	6	1	6	5	56	12	84	71	350	16
UNCLASSIFIED BUILDINGS	84	26	14	16	62	15	92	13	22	17	105	23	12	10	391	17
BUILDINGS TOTAL	329	-	88	-	423	-	706	-	128	-	462	-	119	-	2,255	-

SOURCE: Master Building File; N.Y.C. Department of Buildings, 1964.

Further variations in code enforcement may be attributed to discrepancies in the quantity and quality of the work of the five housing inspectional departments. While four of the agencies have accomplished their Conservation missions in a generally effective and efficient manner, the performance of one suggests the need for a thorough analysis of its functions, procedures and practices and a consequent reorganization of its inspectional work. Policies and procedures in the other departments can certainly be improved, though this need seems less imperative than that of obtaining adequate numbers of adequately paid inspectional, clerical, legal and administrative personnel.

Enforcement has been further inhibited by conflicting jurisdiction among, and the overlapping functions of the inspectional departments. As examples, Health and Buildings are concerned with holes in the floors, ceilings and walls of buildings; Fire and Buildings with the problem of adequate egress; Health and Sanitation with improper garbage disposal; Fire and Electricity with defective wiring. Other examples can be cited but would only tend to emphasize the need for an immediate resolution of the discrepancies and a start towards the amalgamation of the agencies and the services they perform. The very real problems that consolidation would entail should be offset by increased efficiency in the activities of the inspectional departments and consequent savings in manpower.

In the same vein, the laws and codes which are applied are oftentimes far behind the housing and social needs and rising expectations of residents. This is true, too, of the work that is done in connection with the removal of violations; all too often it is of such a quality or performed in such a manner that violations will of necessity recur, all of which suggest the need for re-evaluation of existing laws and codes and their consequent revision to square with the realities of life in New York City.¹¹

Code Enforcement: Sanctions

Compliance may also be related to the need to apply sanctions, and the severity of the penalties imposed on balking owners. As would be expected, compliance is at its highest in buildings where owners have voluntarily lived up to their maintenance obligations.

By definition, owners who had to be penalized are not really motivated to take corrective action. As a consequence, their compliance rates were extremely low prior to the imposition of penalties; and then were undertaken begrudgingly only after it was demonstrated that the application of penalties was to be both rigorous and continuous.

In point of fact, sanctions were required in at least ten percent of all the buildings inspected in Neighborhood Conservation Districts. Especially in the beginning stages of the Program—and though forewarned of the possible consequences—some landlords simply refused to abide by applicable legislative and administrative standards. To help insure compliance, 117 property owners have been prosecuted in Criminal Court for Building or Health violations: 47 in Bloomingdale; 26 in Chelsea; 12 in Hudson; 7 in Hamilton-Grange; 9 in Carnegie Hill; 11 in East Harlem; and 5 in Morningside. Totally, they paid \$31,995 in fines, an average of \$273.00 per case, or about nine times the citywide average. A score of the owners received jail sentences, penalties which were oftentimes imposed concurrently with the fines or held in abeyance pending the removal of violations. Forcing some “slumlords” to leave and others not to enter Neighborhood Conservation Districts, the penalties were fairly effective in gaining high levels of quantitative and sometimes qualitative compliance.

Even though fines and jail sentences in Conservation cases were far beyond those usually imposed, it was also true that they were sometimes of little value in bringing about strict compliance. One reason for this was that some recalcitrant owners found it more economical to pay even these relatively high fines or even go to jail than to properly repair their buildings. When, as in many instances, Conservation fines were minimal, the opportunity of slumlords to evade their legal and moral responsibilities was enhanced almost on a geometrical basis. This was particularly true when some justices of Criminal Court failed to differentiate between first, second, and third offenders; did not take cognizance of the number or severity of the violations; or where counsel to the owners seized upon legal technicalities to frustrate desirable social ends.

More effective has been the application of economic sanctions, which were applied on a concurrent basis in approximately 40 percent of the Conservation

cases tried in Criminal Court. Rent reductions based on hazardous violations or the withholding of rents under the Spiegel Act almost always resulted in the immediate clearance of violations.¹² Significantly, one of the Program's major problems in recent months was that of coordinating the procedures of the housing inspectional departments, the Rent and Rehabilitation Administration and the Welfare Department to avoid the application of economic penalties in cases where property owners removed violations within the grace period provided by the Program.

Only two Conservation buildings have been referred for receivership actions, mainly because of the general inapplicability of this sanction in Neighborhood Conservation Districts, where property owners are, or are made more aware of their responsibilities, or where remedial action was usually taken prior to the need for the City to take control of a building. On the other hand, the potential use of the act has probably been extremely useful in correcting adverse situations. The Program's initial experience with vacate orders is also extremely limited due to the fact that almost all buildings in the Conservation Districts are structurally sound, and only a miniscule number were deteriorated to the point where they constituted a hazard to the life, health and safety of residents. In these cases, major rehabilitation rather than receivership or vacate actions was requested by the Program.¹³

Another variation in the level of compliance—and certainly in gaining sustained compliance—occurred when code enforcement was combined with the creation of an effective tenant organization. In one building in East Harlem, compliance was at first halfhearted. With the creation of a viable, and at times militant tenant organization, the owner was forced to take corrective measures, including the replacement of a superintendent whose maintenance work had been superficial at best. Subsequently, tenants negotiated with him for improvements over and beyond code requirements, having already indicated their receptivity to necessary rent increases. In another example, individual residents of a building in Morningside had complained for years about deteriorating housing conditions. Their complaints were usually met by evasive actions. This pattern was maintained after initial organizational efforts but revised when cellar-to-roof inspections were initiated by district staff in active con-

sultation with the tenants' group. As a result, public areas were cleaned, lighting improved, apartments replastered and painted and defective stoves and refrigerators replaced, and violations removed. More important, the managing agent opened an office in the building and handled complaints with alacrity, partially because sanctions could be applied quickly by the district and partially because of the expertise and power developed by the now permanent tenant organization. Similar results are in evidence in other buildings where tenant groups are flourishing; they suggest that strict code enforcement is in part a result of an equalization of power between landlords and tenants, and the development of a mutual understanding and respect for the problems and responsibilities faced by both parties.

Code Enforcement: By-Products

In another direction, and especially encouraging, have been some of the by-products of the code enforcement effort, especially in terms of the localization and coordination of the housing inspectional services. One distinct feature of this neighborhood-based, interdepartmental approach has been to make inspectors more accessible to neighborhood residents, oftentimes on a scheduled basis. As a result, residents have been able to complain about conditions in their apartments or buildings in face-to-face contacts with district staff or inspectors; the latter have been able to investigate the charges and take corrective measures with a minimum loss of time.

Efficiency has also been increased through the exchange of complaints by the various inspectors in day-to-day and monthly meetings. A district Health Department inspector, for instance, can readily report a possible building violation to the Building Department inspector who can launch an almost immediate investigation. This procedure avoids the need to send formal requests for action through regular channels in both departments. The system can only work, however, when, as in Conservation Districts, the inspectors are in almost daily contact with each other. Among other things, this approach has helped to break down the anonymity of inspectors and residents. Problems between the two remain, but the basis for their solutions has been moved to a less bureaucratic plane.

Of special benefit have been the improvements noted in the activities of inspectorial personnel. Through the Conservation process, the work of inspectional service employees has been brought up to a much higher quantitative and qualitative level. In large measure, inspectors have identified with the goals of the Program and derived pride and satisfaction from their roles in upgrading buildings and neighborhoods. In various contacts with staff, their latent creativity has been canalized into a number of new departmental procedures and even to the passage of some laws. More important, they have gained a greater understanding of, and sympathy with the problems of Conservation landlords and residents; the latter have responded by showing a greater respect for, and appreciation of the work of inspectional personnel.

The elan and increasing efficiency of the inspectors have been communicated to the middle management personnel of the cooperating departments. One effect has been that supervisory and policy officials have looked with general approval on the Conservation Program, seeing it not only as a valuable undertaking in itself but as a laboratory in which innovations can be tested and then applied on a City-wide basis. To do so, they have expedited procedures, changed basic departmental rules and regulations and, most important of all, are now involved in a study which can lead to the consolidation of the inspectional services and the upgrading of housing laws and codes.

Another important by-product of the Conservation Program has been in the field of housing legislation. As a result of the experience gained in the operation of the Conservation Program, a number of significant pieces of City and State legislation were discussed by the Interdepartmental Committee on Housing Legislation and, in some cases, passed by the City Council or State Legislature. These include a local law enacted to raise artificial lighting standards in public hallways and multi-family structures; to license rooming houses and single-room occupancy buildings; and to ban the reoccupancy of single rooms in such buildings by families with children under the age of 16 years. Another local law, passed at the behest of the Program, requires the employment of a janitor in multiple dwellings containing nine or more units. Still another recently enacted measure tightens requirements for sanitary facilities in rooming houses. All of these



Counsel to the program discusses a code violation case in criminal court.

measures have proved, or should prove valuable in raising housing standards in Conservation Districts and throughout the City.

Additionally, and partially as a result of the Conservation experience, New York City is now able to proceed against chronic violators of housing laws in a more efficient and effective fashion. This has been made possible by the creation of a central registry of violations found by any municipal agency against a particular building and a central registry of Housing Court defendants, which records the names of all persons found guilty of violating housing laws and codes.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Outside of Neighborhood Conservation and Area Services Districts, inspectional staff is usually organized on a borough-wide basis and acts on individual complaints brought to the particular department's attention. Cyclical or saturation inspections are carried out by some of the departments on particular classes of buildings or all multiple dwellings in a specific geographical area, but this has not usually been a continuing effort, mainly because of the agencies' manpower shortages.

² Inspectors from the Building Division of the Department—which is concerned with plumbing, elevator, construction and boiler standards, among others—are detailed to the districts as requested but have not been utilized to any appreciable degree by the Conservation Districts. In some of the outlying Area Services Districts, which have a high proportion of one and two family homes, divisional inspectors were called upon with greater frequency, as was the case in Area Services Districts that had to cope with vacate and receivership proceedings.

³ In January, 1964, the Health Department launched an extensive rat extermination campaign in which teams placed poisoned bait in strategic spots within buildings, after prior inspections and notifications to property owners, who would be billed for the service. East Harlem, Carnegie Hill and the east side Area Services Projects should benefit greatly as each of their buildings is treated with the anti-coagulant fourteen times over a twelve month period.

⁴ The Program recognized that code violations were not solely the fault of property owners. Overcrowding was a major cause of violations, as were faulty tenant housekeeping and sanitation practices. As is revealed elsewhere in this report, the Program addressed itself to these problems with equal emphasis; it was the interrelation of these three aspects of the Program that served as the basis for its approach to higher maintenance standards, as well as other aspects of neighborhood improvement.

⁵ Unfortunately, comprehensive records have not been made available to the Program by the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity. Hence, it is impossible to assess the incidence of code violations falling under its jurisdiction, much less indicate the extent of compliance.

⁶ Because most deteriorating buildings house low-income families—and since most of these families do not own or have only limited access to telephones, it has not been realistic to phone for appointments, assuming that these could be kept by inspectors. This is in contrast to the recommendations of Women's Call for Action.

As a result of the code enforcement process, properties in Conservation Districts are being brought up to standards which might be achieved if minimal conditions of safety, soundness and decency are to prevail in "grey" areas. Demerits aside, code compliance in the seven areas under consideration is significantly higher than in similar neighborhoods elsewhere in Manhattan or, for that matter, most neighborhoods in New York City as a whole. To the extent that code enforcement can solve deteriorating housing conditions, a significant step in this direction has been taken by the Program over the past five years.

⁷ Whatever the variables, coverage has been much slower than expected. To offset this, future Conservation districts will follow the procedure initiated in Bedford-Stuyvesant where a team of inspectors was assigned to the district at the start of its Area Services Project. This allowed all 510 multiple dwellings in a 22 block area to be covered in less than six months. Administratively difficult, this system can be made meaningful in terms of the quality of inspections and the application of sanctions when the resident inspector supervises the operation, proper records are kept and district staff undertakes the necessary follow-up to insure compliance.

⁸ One, for instance, would go into a building, stand in the hallway and ask, in a loud voice, if there were any violations of his department's particular code. If there was no answer, he reported that the building was violation free. He was replaced, as was an inspector who put on white gloves and sprayed himself with a disinfectant before entering target buildings.

⁹ The inherent check was the multiplicity of inspections by Departments; inspections by staff; and the communications between staff, owners and residents regarding violations.

¹⁰ In brief, the problem arose because the Department was forced to buy rather than lease electronic data processing equipment that at first was too advanced in terms of output for the agency's limited manpower, thus building up an almost unbelievable backlog of work, and then too limited to adjust the output to personnel resources. Hopefully, newer equipment will be leased in the near future and a more rational ratio of man to machine power obtained by the Department. If so, this really serious impediment will have been overcome.

¹¹ Both consolidation and a revision of the codes may result from a study currently being undertaken by Columbia University of the housing inspectional agencies.

¹² This was not always true in Area Services Districts where, faced with rent reductions, some owners simply walked away from their buildings, leaving to local staff the organization of tenants into cooperatives, who maintained the buildings until such time as the City became receiver of the properties, which was oftentimes delayed because of mandated legal procedures or departmental manpower shortages.

¹³ In contrast is the need to involve receivership and vacate actions in Area Services Districts where a significant portion of the properties are in a really deplorable condition and major rehabilitation is economically contingent on assisted urban renewal projects.

Chapter 5

DECONGESTING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Introduction

When the Buildings Department inspector first inspected a rooming house in one of the Conservation Districts, he found Mrs. E. R. and her eight children living in two small rooms, sharing bathroom and kitchen facilities with two other large families. He informed the property owner and district staff that the R. family was illegally overcrowded, in violation of the Multiple Dwelling Code.¹ Alerted to the situation, Conservation personnel began the dual process of helping to find an adequate-sized, standard apartment for the family and decongesting the neighborhood.

Mrs. R.'s relocation represented a fairly formidable problem. A recent in-migrant from the South, grammar school graduate and supplemental welfare assistance recipient, she worked part-time and was ineligible for public housing. Attached to the neighborhood, Mrs. R. was ambivalent about leaving. She saw the need to obtain a decent apartment for her children but apparently had neither the time, knowledge nor money to hunt for adequate housing if, indeed, adequate housing existed for a poor, Negro mother of eight children. To compound matters, the landlord began proceedings to evict the family in order to remove the violations and end his legal responsibility in the matter.²

To assist Mrs. R., the district director informed the Department of Relocation of the family's relocation needs. The Department checked its listings of vacant apartments but was initially unable to find a suitable unit for the family. Balked for the moment, staff attempted to rehouse Mrs. R. through private real estate contacts, but with no success. Six weeks after the violation was discovered, Mrs. R. was still living in her inadequate quarters.

At that time she had to appear in court to answer eviction proceedings. Staff asked for a maximum stay of the eviction. Though sympathetic to Mrs. R.'s and the City's problem, the Court granted only a few weeks delay. Fortunately, the Department of Reloca-

tion was able to locate a six-room, rent-controlled apartment for the family in another community. Lacking a refrigerator and adequate furniture, the Welfare Department provided Mrs. R. with funds to purchase essential household goods. She also received applicable relocation benefits and moved into the first self-contained apartment the family had ever occupied.

Relocation: Policy and Process

In relocating overcrowded families like the R.'s, the Program was meeting its legal responsibilities,³ as well as two of its most important objectives: decongesting overcrowded buildings and neighborhoods and efficiently and humanely helping to find good housing for the relocatees. These goals were based on insights gained in New California and West 27th Street projects: First, it was impossible for families to lead anything approaching decent lives when they were cramped together in inadequate quarters. Neither they nor the community could tolerate the continuation of overcrowded conditions. Secondly, code enforcement, building upgrading and tenant assistance, education and organization programs could not succeed in the presence of serious overcrowding. Thirdly, general neighborhood security and well-being could not be achieved when individuals, fleeing intolerable living conditions—spilled out into the streets and quite understandably engaged in a-social, anti-social or even criminal activities. Finally, no matter how limited the relocation burden, opposition would develop unless relocation became something more than a statistical movement of people.

Acting on these insights, the Program made plans at its inception to enforce legal requirements related to occupancy and help reduce population density in the districts. Since no major demolition was undertaken in Conservation areas, and overcrowding was confined to a small segment of the buildings, mass relocation problems did not arise. There were problems. Initially, the Neighborhood Conservation Program did not qualify as a public body engaged in relocation activities.

Footnotes for this chapter are on page 106.





One of the program's major accomplishments was the relocation of overcrowded families from rooming houses and SRO's to sound, self-contained apartments in a process that did not entail the personal, social, economic and political anguish usually associated with the forced movement of people.

Accordingly, overcrowded families were not eligible for relocation services and benefits. During this period, relocation was limited to crises involving clients of the Department of Welfare.⁴ To overcome the situation, the State Legislature amended the relocation section of the Administrative Code in March, 1960, to specifically include Conservation Districts. This allowed the City Planning Commission to designate the seven communities as neighborhood improvements districts; thereafter, families living in violation of housing laws and codes became eligible for relocation services and benefits.⁵

At approximately the same time, New York City adopted a uniform and expanded schedule of relocation payments for tenants displaced by site clearance and public improvement operations. Under this schedule, eligible Conservation families were entitled to cash bonuses ranging from \$300 to \$500 if they self-relocated to standard apartments, and \$50 to \$125 if they were aided in their relocation by the Department of Relocation. Fixed sums for moving expenses were also made available in appropriate circumstances. To expand the number of apartments made available for relocation purposes, New York City also paid finders

fees up to \$250 to owners or agents who listed standard dwelling units with the Central Vacancy Bureau of the Department of Relocation.

Also aiding in the decongestion process was the passage in 1959 of Local Laws 4, 6 and 45, which prohibited families with children under 16 years of age from renting accommodations in rooming houses and single-room occupancy buildings after April, 1960. After January, 1965, all families residing in such circumstances after April, 1960 must vacate. These measures allowed the districts to attack a particularly pernicious aspect of overcrowding.⁶

Putting these benefits into action required close coordination and cooperation between the Conservation Program and the Department of Relocation, the Department of Welfare and the New York City Housing Authority, whose personnel carried out various phases of relocation. Orientation about the objectives of Conservation and procedures for meshing the relocation needs of overcrowded families with available apartments were initially established in July, 1960, at which time the Neighborhood Conservation Program began to formally report its relocation activities.

TABLE 6
NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL TENANTS RELOCATED FROM SITES
OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS,
AND TOTAL NEW YORK CITY,
July 1, 1960 through December 31, 1963.

Neighborhood Conservation Districts	Number of Residential Tenants Relocated	Percentage Distribution
Bloomingdale	165	20.2%
Carnegie Hill	34	4.2%
Chelsea	280	34.3%
East Harlem	37	4.5%
Hamilton-Grange	26	3.2%
Hudson	237	29.1%
Morningside	37	4.5%
Total	816	100.0%
Total New York City	30,356	
Neighborhood Conservation as percent of Total New York City		2.7%
Source: Department of Relocation		

The expansion of the Program and the impact of the Area Services Projects necessitated a complete re-evaluation of relocation policies and practices in the fall of 1961, and brought about a consequent change in relocation procedures and priorities. As a result, the Department of Relocation undertook complete responsibility for relocation in high volume areas such as Hudson and Bloomingdale, thereby relieving district staff of what had been one of its most time consuming tasks.⁷ In December of 1963, the Department began to undertake all relocation activities in all districts since the complexity of relocating even a small number of families had seriously reduced the ability of district staff to deal with other pressing housing and social matters. Early in 1963, the Housing Authority was prevailed upon to extend its priorities in processing the applications of eligible, small Conservation families to those with five or more members. This was extremely helpful in assisting relocatees to find suitable apartments while avoiding eviction proceedings, as has been the recent ability of the Program to gain apartment listings from the Department of Relocation prior to the issuance of final eviction orders.

Relocation: The Product

Mrs. R.'s was one of the 816 relocation cases handled by Conservation and Relocation personnel between July 1, 1960, and December 31, 1963. As Table 6 reveals, the vast majority of the relocatees came from Hudson, Chelsea and Bloomingdale. It also shows that the Conservation Program's relocation load has been an almost infinitesimal part, 2.7 percent, of the City's total relocation activities during this period.

Unlike most relocatees, families displaced from Neighborhood Conservation Districts tended to need assistance from public authorities in finding other accommodations. Thus, only 28.6 percent of Conservation, as opposed to 56.3 percent of all relocatees in the City found standard accommodations on their own. In addition, Conservation families were less apt to gain public housing accommodations, 7.8 to 12.2 percent. These and other relationships can be seen in Table 7. In another deviation from the normal experience, Conservation relocatees tended to gain housing accommodations in Manhattan. It was true, on the other hand, that the vast majority of the relocatees have had

to leave Manhattan for other boroughs, notably Brooklyn and the Bronx, to obtain dwellings. Table 8 pictures these relationships.

Relocation: Problems and Progress

In relocating about 3,000 individuals, or less than three percent of the population of the seven communities, the districts have faced both similar and varying relocation problems.⁸ As a general rule, those most affected by overcrowded conditions were large, minority group families who received partial or full public assistance and were oftentimes found to be ineligible or unsuitable for public housing. A high proportion came from rural backgrounds, lacked information about their rights and were highly immobile. They presented difficult relocation situations, as did some multi-problem families and a few cases involving emotionally disturbed individuals. Because of these and other factors, the vast majority of relocatees needed assistance in finding other housing.

Although an adequate supply of standard apartments were listed with the areas, the rents of some were above Department of Welfare rent ceilings or the owners would not accept public assistance recipients or families with children. Contrary to law, other landlords rejected minority group families. Additionally, a high proportion of the apartments were rented before Conservation families had a chance to view them, or in cases of self-relocatees, were not deemed standard by the Department of Relocation. Competing with other public agencies for available units, the Program was unable, on occasion, to gain adequate housing accommodations for relocatees within a suitable period of time.⁹ Beset with these and other problems, the districts also faced the continuing crises situation of having to find apartments before eviction proceedings were consummated, an imperative not felt by other public agencies.¹⁰

Besides these general problems, the districts have been confronted with a number of fairly unique situations. One derived from the fact that overcrowding was most prevalent in rooming houses, single-room occupancy buildings and third rate hotels. Since Hudson, Chelsea and Bloomingdale had a fairly high proportion of these structures in their housing stock, they have had the largest relocation loads. One result of

TABLE 7
NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL TENANTS RELOCATED
FROM SITES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS, AND TOTAL NEW YORK CITY, BY TYPE OF ACCOMMODATIONS OBTAINED,
January 1, 1960 Through December 31, 1963

Type of Accommodation	Number of Residential Tenants Relocated				Neighborhood Conservation as a percent of Total New York City
	Neighborhood Conservation		Total New York City		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Self-relocated					
Private Housing	233	28.6%	17,078	56.2%	1.4%
Institutions	24	2.9	156	0.5	15.4
Unknown	86	10.5	3,626	12.0	2.4
Total	343	42.0%	20,860	68.7%	1.6%
Aided in Relocating					
Private Housing	398	48.8	5,234	17.2	7.6
Public Housing	64	7.8	3,703	12.2	1.7
Inter and Intra-site moves	9	1.1	209	0.7	4.3
Other City Properties	2	0.2	350	1.2	0.6
Total	473	58.0%	9,946	31.3%	5.0%
GRAND TOTAL	816	100.0%	30,356	100.0%	2.7%

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF RELOCATION

this was that the three districts were forced to slow their code enforcement campaigns in order to prevent a major build-up in the relocation loads. Forced delays in inspections occasioned by relocation necessarily curtailed or impaired other neighborhood improvement activities.

Lacking such accommodations, East Harlem, Carnegie Hill, Morningside and Hamilton-Grange have had relatively low relocation burdens. On the other hand, when overcrowded families were found living, not in single rooms, but in fairly large, self-contained apartments, it was extremely difficult to find adequate accommodations for these families. Moreover, and since the rent ranges for large apartments were oftentimes prohibitive, many low-income families were unable to afford the new accommodations or unwilling to accept public assistance from the Department of Welfare to offset rent differentials. Many of those who did accept financial aid became completely dependent on public assistance.

Relocation posed other problems. As is detailed elsewhere in this report, relocation entailed the displacement of a significant number of minority group

families, with a consequent shift in the racial and ethnic balance of some of the districts and, to some extent, the exacerbation of intergroup relations.¹¹ Then too, the displacement of overcrowded families oftentimes opened up rooming house accommodations to individuals and couples with severe social, emotional and physical problems. Thus, while the district solved one of the problems leading to neighborhood decline, they found themselves confronted with situations that oftentimes defied description, much less solution.

On another level, relocation meant that some families with deep neighborhood roots had to move to new surroundings. No matter how efficient and humane relocation was carried out, this entailed a wrenching of emotional ties and a journey into fear and insecurity, oftentimes to the detriment of family stability. Equally pernicious was the fact that the vast majority of families were relocated from poor housing in improving neighborhoods to good housing in deteriorating neighborhoods. This is borne out by data in Table 9 which shows that, of 312 families who were aided in their relocation efforts during 1961-1962, seventy-six per cent were settled in neighborhoods in which the in-

TABLE 8
DESTINATION OF RESIDENTIAL TENANTS RELOCATED FROM SITES OF THE
NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, AND TOTAL NEW YORK CITY,
July 1, 1962 Through December 31, 1963

Destination	Neighborhood Conservation		Total New York City		Neighborhood Conservation as a percent of Total New York City
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Manhattan	285	34.9%	8,086	26.6%	3.5%
Bronx	213	26.1	6,298	20.7	3.4
Brooklyn	188	23.0	8,436	27.8	2.2
Queens	10	1.2	1,560	5.1	0.6
Richmond	2	0.3	365	1.2	0.6
Total New York City	698	85.5%	24,745	81.5%	2.8%
Outside New York City	20	2.5	1,791	5.9	1.1
Miscellaneous*	98	12.0	3,820	12.6	2.6
GRAND TOTAL	816	100.0%	30,356	100.0%	2.7%

*Includes deaths, and institutional and unknown moves.
Percentages may not add due to rounding.

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF RELOCATION

evidence of social problems was higher than in the Conservation area from which they moved. Sixteen percent did as well and only seven percent better.¹² Thus, relocation was not particularly rewarding in terms of improving the total social environment of the relocatees.¹³

In contrast was the almost spectacular advances made by Conservation relocatees in gaining better housing accommodations. This is illustrated in Table 10 which shows that the 77 families relocated by the Department of Relocation in the last half of 1962 were, on the average, composed of 4 person households living in 1.5 rooms for which they paid \$83.00 a month in rent or an average of \$51.00 a room a month. After relocation, the average room count was 4 rooms per family, for which they paid a monthly rental of \$78.00 or an average of \$19.00 a room a month. Through relocation the families more than doubled the size of their accommodations, while saving an average of \$32.00 per room each month.¹⁴ The savings were also absolute: the 77 families paid a total of \$6,219.94 a month for their accommodations in the Conservation

Districts; they now pay \$5,796.52 a month for their new dwellings, a net savings of \$423.42. Since the vast majority of relocatees received full or partial public assistance, the savings have accrued to the Department of Welfare.

Bare statistics fail to convey what relocation has meant to those touched by the process. There has been little antagonism to the idea of moving by those directly concerned, though this was not true of a number of organizations who purported to speak for the relocatees. Almost all the relocated families were anxious to gain better accommodations, though many were at first hesitant about moving or had a decided preference to remain in their particular part of Manhattan. In almost all cases, reservations evaporated as staff gave full explanations of the reasons for moving and the benefits which would accrue to the families. Indeed, some socially though not legally overcrowded families asked to be relocated. A fairly large number of the relocatees have returned to the districts to express their thanks and relate the improvements that relocation has made in their life situations.

TABLE 9
RELOCATION FROM NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS TO RATED HEALTH AREAS
1961-1962

	Total Number of Families Relocated	Health Area Rated as to Incidence of Social Problems District Health Area										
			Highest		Moderately High		Medium		Moderately Low		Lowest	
			¹ No.	² %	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bloomingdale	39	Moderately High	28	72	9	23	0	—	2	5	0	—
Carnegie Hill	33	Medium ³	26	79	5	15	2	6	0	—	0	—
Chelsea	97	Moderately ³ High	68	70	19	20	9	9	0	—	1	1
East Harlem	7	Highest	6	86	1	14	0	—	0	—	0	—
Hamilton-Grange	37	Moderately ³ High	29	78	7	19	1	3	0	—	0	—
Hudson	80	Medium ³	57	71	12	15	6	8	5	6	0	—
Morningside	19	Moderately High	11	58	4	21	0	—	4	21	0	—

¹ Number of families relocated

² Percent of total relocation for each district

³ In these districts, which include two health areas of different rating, the predominating rating has been chosen as applicable.

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF RELOCATION

Equally revealing in assessing the social and personal meaning of relocation was the manner in which it was undertaken in the districts. Bloomingdale's approach typified the Program's concern for the human side of relocation. Starting with a small nucleus of volunteers, the project began to involve middle-class residents in a "mover-helper" program. Under staff direction, volunteers journeyed, often fruitlessly, to Brooklyn and the Bronx to view the apartments assigned to the district's relocatees. During one period, over 60 apartments were visited before 20 were certified as standard. The volunteers also worked closely with families in helping them to purchase furniture and secure responsible movers. When the families were successfully relocated, "mover-helpers" visited them in their new neighborhoods to help acquaint them with community resources and facilities. This was especially helpful to the old, the sick and the non-English speaking relocatees who, quite naturally, missed their old neighborhood and were apprehensive about their new environments. Some volunteer "family-helpers" continued to visit the families after the immediate problems attendant upon relocation were solved. The entire process was also instructive for the middle-class volunteers. As described by one observer: "they stepped across 'off limits' thresholds. They met hitherto face-

less slum dwellers. Their concern, and often their guilt, found constructive outlets in doing rather than deploring."

Public authorities were instrumental in providing special services and assistance to Conservation relocatees. The Amsterdam Welfare Center, for instance, assessed the material needs of its clients prior to relocation and was instrumental in obtaining household articles and furniture that allowed the families to live better lives in their new self-contained apartments. Ranging as high as \$359 for a family of six, expenditures for needed goods were complemented by post-relocation visits to ensure that the families were adequately housed and served in their new environments. Most of the other Welfare Centers servicing the districts have taken similar steps.

Of special interest was the unique case work unit established by the Department of Welfare in conjunction with the Conservation Program in the Spring of 1960. It was designed to assist families in the Bloomingdale area who were being displaced by Housing Authority rehabilitation and redevelopment projects. The concerned 155 families, who had a total of 569 children, presented a wide range of social problems, the majority stemming from broken home situations. As a

TABLE 10
RELOCATION DATA NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
July 1, 1962-December 31, 1962

DISTRICT	AVERAGES FOR DISTRICT ADDRESS					AVERAGES FOR NEW ADDRESS			
	No. Families Moved	No. Persons In Family	No. Rooms	Monthly Rent	Monthly Rent Per Room	No. Rooms	New Monthly Rent	New Monthly Rent Per Room	Monthly Saving In Rent Per Room
Bloomingdale	16	4	1+	87.00	82.00	4	67.00	17.00	65.00
Carnegie Hill	6	7+	3	103.00	28.00	5+	116.00	21.00	7.00
Chelsea	3	3+	2+	73.00	37.00	3+	55.00	16.00	21.00
Hamilton-Grange	12	4+	2+	73.00	35.00	4+	77.00	17.00	18.00
Hudson	33	3+	1+	76.00	69.00	3½	72.00	20.00	49.00
Morningside	7	4+	1½	86.00	56.00	4	81.00	20.00	36.00
Average for all districts	77*	4	1½	83.00	51.00	4	78.00	19.00	32.00

*Total number of families relocated.

Total number of rooms prior to relocation — 124

Total number of rooms at new address — 311

Total monthly rent at old address — \$6,219.94

Total monthly rent at new address — \$5,796.52

Total saving in monthly rent — \$423.42

Average saving per family in monthly rent — \$5.50

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF RELOCATION

consequence of various problems, not one family appeared to be eligible for public housing accommodations; moreover many would have had a difficult time in relocating to private accommodations. The special task force of social, medical and psychiatric case workers, home economists and nutritionists assigned to the project sought to correct this by assisting the families through intensive case work services before, during and following relocation. As a related value, the unit tried to prepare the families for new life situations in self-contained apartments. Some striking results were achieved. Within a year's time, 38 families had been enabled to meet the eligibility requirements for public housing. Also during this time period, 23 families were helped to become completely self-sustaining, resulting in a savings to the City of over \$50,000 a year in public assistance funds. Of course, no monetary value can be assigned to the re-establishment of family life which this particular project helped to accomplish.¹⁵

FOOTNOTES

¹ While a determination of the number of cubic feet enters into the decision, the code generally provides that not more than two adults can reside in a room which can be used for sleeping purposes. Children under 12 count as half an adult and those under 2 are not counted at all. Thus, the code can allow one adult, two children under 12 and two children under 2 to reside in one room in a self-contained apartment. There can be serious social, though not legal overcrowding in Conservation Districts.

² The violation is placed against the landlord. To correct it, he must remove the cause, which he can do by either persuading the family to move or through eviction proceedings. To prevent evictions, the Program has adopted a policy that it will not ask the Buildings Department to prosecute owners for this violation alone, though this may be done in connection with other violations. Gaining a respite from most landlords, the time period was used to relocate families to standard housing. Fortunately, no evictions have taken place, partially because of the generous stays granted by the Courts. The situation is, of course, fraught with peril, as is indicated in *Strauss V. Shine*, Trial Term, Part II, Civil Court, Judge Wohl presiding.

³ In addition to overcrowding violations, families in Conservation Districts also qualify for relocation as a result of the posting of unsafe or vacate orders issued by the Building or Health Departments, shut-off orders issued by the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity or due to illegal occupancy of cellars.

⁴ In Bloomingdale for instance, Welfare evacuated its clientele from one building, paying finders fees to owners or agents in order to obtain standard apartments for these families.

⁵ Section 1152C-1.0 Sub paragraph A.

⁶ To prevent the recurrence of overcrowded conditions, Conservation personnel immediately informed property owners of their rental responsibilities, and began to work with the Department of Buildings and Corporation Counsel to gain maximum penalties for property owners who violated these statutes. There has not been any widespread violation of the statutes in the districts since their passage. However, isolated cases have caused the Program to recommend that, in addition to a maximum fine, violators should also be required to pay all relocation expenses, which average \$500 a family.

⁷ In Hudson it was estimated at one time that the assistant director spent

The side effects of relocation have been of significance to the seven neighborhoods. Code enforcement has been improved as a result of decongestion efforts, which is also true of the diminution in the rate of depreciation of housing and community facilities. Increased cleanliness in the neighborhoods may be attributed in part to the reduced density brought about by relocation, as is the case with improvements in the security and general social well being of the areas. Reductions in the school populations of the districts and the incidence of communicable disease have been favorably commented upon by public and private parties to the Conservation process.

Finally, and as implied in Table 11, all of the districts except Hudson and the newly expanded areas of East Harlem and Hamilton-Grange have been successfully decongested in a fairly short period of time with very little of the personal, social, economic and political anguish that is usually associated with relocation.

75 percent of her time on relocation matters, including contacting landlords, offering new apartments, advising tenants of their rights, discussing rent problems and filling out necessary forms.

⁸ Private housing rehabilitation efforts have also brought about population losses and affected the district's racial balance. Data is not available since this is a private matter but the impact is thought to be high in Bloomingdale and Chelsea.

⁹ The Housing Authority, the Board of Education, the Department of Public Works, the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, and the Port of New York Authority are among the public bodies engaged in construction and, thus, directly or indirectly in relocation activities. This is also true of private sponsors of publicly-assisted housing developments.

¹⁰ Other agencies, who clear sites completely, can vary their relocation rates as circumstances dictate though, of course, they are subject to other demands to finish relocation as quickly as possible.

¹¹ This was true, also, of relocation caused by private rehabilitation efforts and over which the City had negligible control. See Chapter Eight for a discussion of this aspect of relocation.

¹² The date is indicative of the objective chances of large, low-income minority group families to move to better surroundings in New York City, since self-relocatees do not appear to fare much better. On the other hand, the size of the health areas is so large, it is quite possible for a family to move into a part of a new neighborhood which might be lower in terms of the incidence of social problems than is indicated by the Table.

¹³ This is borne out in part by post relocation interviews with nine Chelsea families, almost all of whom responded negatively in their feelings about their new communities though not about their new accommodations.

¹⁴ Preliminary data for 173 families relocated during 1963 shows the same general pattern except that there was an increase of about 10 percent in the total monthly rent at the new, as opposed to the old address.

¹⁵ One of the major contributions of the Program's relocation project has been its impact on other relocation efforts. Thus, many of the elements of the Bloomingdale program are an integral part of the relocation process taking place in the West Side Urban Renewal Area. This is true of the Family Counselling Program of the Welfare Department and Operation Phoenix. The diagnostic study of the area's relocatees was also anticipated to some degree by the Program in its first Area Services Project, West Side, South.

TABLE 11
RELOCATION FROM CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, BY SIX MONTH PERIODS
July 1960-December 1963

DISTRICT	1960 July 1- Dec. 31	1961 Jan. 1- June 30	1961 July 1- Dec. 31	1962 Jan. 1- June 30	1962 July 1- Dec. 31	1963 Jan. 1- June 30	1963 July 1- Dec. 31	TOTALS
Bloomingdale	10	24	14	54	33	12	18	165 (20%)
Hamilton-Grange					16	5	5	26 (3%)
Morningside			6	9	8	8	6	37 (5%)
East Harlem			6	10	4	14	3	37 (5%)
Carnegie Hill			9	9	10	4	2	34 (4%)
Hudson				91	69	63	14	237 (29%)
Chelsea	40	95	55	35	26	21	8	280 (34%)
TOTALS	50 (6%)	119 (15%)	90 (11%)	208 (25%)	166 (20%)	127 (16%)	56 (7%)	816 (100%)

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF RELOCATION



Sound brownstone, converted into rooming houses, posed both relocation and rehabilitation problems for the program in Chelsea

Chapter 6

UPGRADING BUILDINGS

Introduction

Given its inherent limitations, code enforcement cannot completely reverse patterns of physical deterioration and decay, much less really insure adequate housing for sound family life in improving neighborhoods. Realizing this, the Program sought to induce landlords to upgrade their properties over and beyond code requirements. To give assistance in this effort, owners were counseled on various upgrading measures by the Program's real estate management consultants, who placed special emphasis on moderate rehabilitation projects. Conservation also sought to attract new and responsible owners and sound sources of equity capital to the seven neighborhoods. Further, it moved to initiate and implement legislation providing economic aids and incentives designed to spur property owners to make necessary improvements at reasonable costs to themselves and their tenants.

In keeping with its primary objectives, the Program did not press for housing rehabilitation projects that would displace tenants and, thus, change the economic and social character of the districts. This policy was followed except in the case of single-room occupancy buildings and deteriorated rooming houses where only major rehabilitation or demolition could remove foci of physical and social blight from the seven neighborhoods. In this connection, the Program promoted major rehabilitation by private individuals and public authorities, and, in some cases, pressed for the demolition of structures beyond physical and social redemption. Finally, the Program sought to create new housing on vacant or under-utilized land in situations where demolition would not entail mass relocation but would improve the City's housing supply and the character of the neighborhoods.

Real Estate Consultant Services

Early in the experience, it became clear that housing deterioration was not solely the fault of "slum-

lords" or "bad tenants." In almost all districts, it was evident that economically marginal, particularly elderly property owners simply did not have the requisite experience, knowledge or ability to properly manage their buildings. As a result, essentially sound structures, with fairly good tenancy, were decaying, oftentimes to the dismay and even chagrin of some apparently well-intentioned landlords. To reverse this trend and assist property owners in taking meaningful improvement activities, the Program retained the services of the real estate firm of Brown, Harris, Stevens, Inc. in September, 1960. The contract, as approved by the Board of Estimate and the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency, empowered the firm to give Conservation District property owners real estate management advice on:

- Common real estate management problems such as physical renovation; replacement of depreciable equipment; curing functional obsolescence; painting and decorating; and maintenance and house-keeping practices.
- Renting and leasing problems, including proper advertising practices; tenant selection policies; and the use of appropriate application forms and leases.
- Employment problems related to proper building management and maintenance; including advice on personnel changes, proper personnel recruitment, screening and interviewing practices; and recommendations related to the employment of reliable managing agents.
- Housing code violations, the removal of which were not only mandated by law but essential to sound building management and maintenance practices.
- Moderate rehabilitation and modernization problems, the resolution of which would improve the internal and external characteristics of the building but not require structural changes or the displacement of the present class of tenants because of the extent of the work or as a by-product of consequent rent increases.
- Major rehabilitation problems in those cases where it was the policy to spur the conversion of particular class "B" rooming houses, single room oc-

Footnotes for this chapter are on page 128.

- Statutory rent problems and remedies permissible under the emergency housing rent law, rules and regulations, including instructions on the proper use of requisite forms.
- Mortgage financing problems, including information on the content and procedures of federal and state mortgage insurance and loan programs; the municipal loan and tax abatement and exemption programs; conventional mortgage programs; and other economic aids and incentives designed to provide property owners with resources to carry-out building improvements.

To provide this service without fee to district property owners, the Program negotiated a contract with the firm which called for an expenditure of \$30,000 in retainer fees over a 24-month period. Additionally, the consultants received \$75 per building serviced up to a maximum of 500 buildings, after which buildings were to be serviced without cost to the Program.¹

In practice, the firm's management consultant made an inspection of a particular property on the suggestion of the owner or district staff. The inspection covered an analysis of the condition of the exterior of the building, fire escapes, cornices, roofs, tanks, rear yards and courts, vestibules, halls, and the floors, walls and ceilings of public areas and apartments. The

management consultant also inspected the fuel, plumbing and electrical systems of the buildings. Using a special form, specific conditions were rated and, in a formal letter to the owner, a series of steps to improve the building were recommended. Suggestions were also made about matters concerning the management of the building and the financial tools and resources which could be employed to bring about the suggested improvements. Lists of responsible architects and contractors were supplied to landlords on request. On occasion, the consultant and district staff conferred directly with the owner on the need as well as the means to improve the building beyond code compliance. These conferences were sometimes arranged to coincide with the time when code violations were first brought to the attention of the owner, the point being made that it was cheaper in the long run to undertake moderate rehabilitation measures rather than to simply comply with code requirements.

Between October, 1960 and December, 1963, 259 buildings were inspected by the service: 105 in Chelsea; 63 in East Harlem; 55 in Bloomingdale; 21 in Carnegie Hill; 9 in Hudson; 4 in Hamilton-Grange and 2 in Morningside. Almost 2,000 recommendations covering every conceivable type of building improvement were suggested to the owners. Of these, 12 items were recommended to at least 19 different owners, as enumerated in Table 12.

TABLE 12
LEADING IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY
THE CONSERVATION REAL ESTATE ADVISORY SERVICE
October, 1960 - December, 1963

RANK	RECOMMENDATION	NUMBER OF TIMES RECOMMENDED
1	Paint window frames and sashes	221
2	Paint or clean facade	167
3	Paint or remove cornice	156
4	Paint (ornamental) iron railings and/or iron fences	108
5	Install all new brass plumbing	100
6	Paint fire escapes	98
7	Install adequate wiring	87
8	Repaint, (refinish, replace) letter boxes and bell plates	70
9	Paint public walls and ceilings	77
10	Thoroughly clean and paint	48
11	Paint (clean) stoop(s)	39
12	Conversion to be made from S.R.O. occupancy to self-contained units	19

SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAM

After the directed assumption of the service by the Program, systematic reinspections were undertaken of the 259 buildings.² As detailed in Table 13, 57 percent of the minor recommendations—those costing less than \$100 per item—and 39 percent of the major recommendations—those costing over \$100 per item—were undertaken by the property owners. Totally, this meant that half of the recommendations were carried out. Leaving aside the limited experience of Hudson, Hamilton-Grange and Morningside, the table also shows that the service has been most effective in Bloomingdale, Chelsea, Carnegie Hill and East Harlem, in that order. Since code compliance and major rehabilitation have succeeded in the districts in about the same general order, it would appear that there was a close correlation between gaining building improvements and the composition of the housing stock of the districts, as well as the financial status of district property owners and emphasis on program within the districts.

From another viewpoint, the data shows that a substantial segment of property owners in declining areas can be induced to improve their properties over and beyond code requirements even though financial assistance has been limited, a fact which is revealed in another section of this chapter. Equally significant, the minor and especially major property improvements which were undertaken aggregated expenditures in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, only a minor part of which were immediately recouped through permis-

sible statutory rent increases.³ Additionally, the data suggests that, while important, short range economic gains are not the sole determinant of property improvement decisions. They are, however, significant, as witnessed by the differential compliance rates for major and minor improvements, as well as the prevailing pattern of the non-availability of financial resources and low rent structures in Carnegie Hill and East Harlem, which have the lowest compliance rates.⁴

While there are still some questions about the efficacy of the service, especially as it is applied in old law tenements, there is little doubt that it has made an appreciable difference in the interior and exterior condition of a substantial number of Conservation buildings. Since almost all of these upgrading ventures are in addition to the achievement of a high level of compliance with housing codes and laws, this has meant that a significant number of formerly deteriorating structures have been returned to a generally good, and in some cases excellent condition. Coupled with other moderate and major rehabilitation ventures, the improvements have had a positive impact on the neighborhoods, especially Bloomingdale and Chelsea. Equally important, the service has matured to a point when it can be used with increasing effectiveness in the districts.⁵ Thus, Hudson plans to use the resource independently in relatively good buildings throughout its neighborhood, thereby spurring improvements while limiting code enforcement to the area's really deplorable structures.

TABLE 13
SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS
IN NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
October, 1960-December, 1963

DISTRICT	Number of Buildings Inspected and Reinspected	Number of Recommendations Made			Number of Recommendations Complied With			Percent of compliance		
		Minor	Major	Total	Minor	Major	Total	Minor	Major	Total
BLOOMINGDALE	55	204	175	379	140	109	249	69%	62%	66%
CARNEGIE HILL	21	173	99	272	97	28	125	56	28	46
CHELSEA	105	342	191	533	191	55	246	56	29	46
EAST HARLEM	63	405	255	660	196	79	275	48	31	42
HAMILTON GRANGE	4	16	9	25	10	3	13	62	33	52
HUDSON	9	52	42	94	40	25	65	77	59	69
MORNINGSIDE	2	14	9	23	13	5	18	93	55	78
TOTAL	259	1,206	780	1,986	687	304	991	57%	39%	50%

SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Related Moderate Rehabilitation

Using conventional mortgage financing or their own resources, some property owners in each district began to upgrade their buildings before the real estate service was initiated; others have taken similar measures without availing themselves of its counsel. In all cases, none of these efforts entailed the displacement of tenants because of the extent of the work or due to consequent rent increases, the Program's definition of moderate rehabilitation.

Some of the property owners were apparently motivated to make the improvements simply out of a sense of "neighborhood pride;" because of rivalry with other landlords who had improved their properties; or as the result of general neighborhood improvements induced by the Program. Others apparently have been actuated by the long-range economic benefits flowing from such improvements. Still others have upgraded

their buildings to "get code enforcement off my back." Whatever the causes, there was little or no impetus for such improvement efforts prior to the start of the Program.

In Chelsea, considerable success was achieved in inducing owners of class "A" buildings to improve their structures. On the 400 block of West 22nd Street, for instance, 80 percent either sandblasted or painted the exteriors of their properties and made improvements and repairs within the structures. Essentially good buildings even prior to the Conservation effort, it appears that the improvements were triggered mainly as a result of the conversion of some of the block's rooming houses to class "A" structures, which was also true of the 105 buildings in the district which have undergone varying degrees of modernization since the start of the Program.

Bloomingtondale's moderate rehabilitation efforts



Moderate rehabilitation has improved a number of apartment houses in Bloomingtondale

have been fairly extensive. Two hotels are prime examples of the trend. One was at least a "14th" grade hotel when the code enforcement campaign started. Initially, 420 violations of the multiple dwelling law were uncovered, with reinspections revealing 48 additional violations. Approximately 700 violations of the standards administered by the Departments of Health, Fire, Sanitation and Water Supply, Gas and Electricity were found. Totally, only a handful are outstanding.

In removing the violations, management was prodded to go beyond statutory requirements. Working floor-by-floor over a twelve month period, each of the 270 units in the 10-story building was repaired, replastered, refurnished and painted. Public areas were similarly improved and the building's plumbing system renovated. Repairs and refurbishment were undertaken in the lobby and entrance halls and stairs, and the first three floors of the building were cleaned and a limestone coating applied. To thwart possible re-control and rent reductions, management finally provided required hotel services and facilities, and is making a start towards resolving critical social and police problems posed by some tenants. Another hotel spent over \$50,000 in refurbishing when it was announced that the Housing Authority had acquired, and would rehabilitate eight brownstones and one single room occupancy building on the opposite side of the block.

Following improvements in the district's pilot block, a number of owners elsewhere in the area have undertaken moderate rehabilitation ventures. This trend has not been confined to the district's deteriorating structures; an increasing number of high rise structures on Riverside Drive and West End Avenue have undergone moderate rehabilitation, with the tenants in others pressing for similar upgrading. Though not in existence as long as Bloomingdale, Hudson is witnessing a similar trend. As in other districts, improvements in relatively good buildings have taken place only after substantial changes have been registered in target structures. Circular in effect, moderate rehabilitation or modernization efforts in essentially sound buildings have increased the pressure on owners of class "B" dwellings to substantially improve or convert their buildings to family-centered units.

Thirty-four buildings in East Harlem have been substantially upgraded. These efforts also appear to be the result of what seems to be the infectious spread of

Conservation, since staff had little or no formal contact with many of the owners prior to the renovations. In Morningside, 13 buildings have been moderately improved since the start of its program in May, 1961; the work usually entailing the painting of stoops, railings, window grills, front doors and areaways and the installation of adequate wiring. Carnegie Hill's rehabilitation efforts have been confined to the installation of new heating systems in two buildings and rewiring in 3 others. The lag here may be a result of the Planning Commission's designation of the district as an area suitable for urban renewal; the impact of rent control and faults in rent control procedures; and the possible redevelopment plans of Mt. Sinai Hospital, which are commented on elsewhere in this chapter. In contrast, ten owners in the southern segment of Hamilton-Grange undertook modernization or modern rehabilitation ventures in anticipation of the code enforcement campaign.

Attracting Equity Capital

One of the major factors contributing to housing deterioration in Neighborhood Conservation Districts was that of the recent and fairly extensive flight of responsible owners and sound equity capital from the areas. In general, and as the neighborhoods started on the downgrade, a number of reputable landlords sold their holdings; others failed to invest in the districts. Circular in effect, this led to a further deterioration of the housing stock, and a virtual moratorium on mortgage loans and new construction in the districts. The resulting vacuum was filled all too often by what appeared to be exploitive or unconscionable property owners and certainly by extremely costly conventional mortgage money.

To attract responsible owners and sound investments in "grey" areas, members of the Rockefeller family conceived the idea of forming an organization which would "offer inducements to private investors to buy and improve 'slum' properties."⁶ To do so, the Conservation, Rehabilitation and Renewal Foundation was established, with the general aim of acquiring, rehabilitating or otherwise upgrading structurally sound though deteriorating buildings for continued occupancy by low-income families.

The Foundation was particularly interested in pur-

chasing and upgrading old and new law tenements, as well as acquiring vacant single room occupancy structures, class "B" rooming houses or "hotels." The improvement measures that were to be taken included the installation of central heating, where this was needed, and the provision of adequate electrical wiring, electrical fixtures, lighting, toilets in bathrooms for each apartment and kitchen cabinets. Upgrading was also to include replastering and painting and the removal of violations of applicable housing laws and codes. None of the improvements that were to be undertaken were such that, by reason of cost and consequent rent increase or due to the extent of the work, tenants would be displaced from their dwelling units, which was in keeping with the goals of the Program.

To achieve these and other objectives, the Foundation selects an appropriate building and contracts to purchase the structure. In order to prepare plans and specifications for the contemplated improvements, and obtain a firm bid for the performance of the work, investors are asked to loan the Foundation the necessary funds to retain an architect and undertake necessary legal and administrative actions. The loan is evidenced by a non-interest bearing demand note and the funds made available to the Foundation's subsidiary stock (operating) corporation, the C.R.R. Rehabilitation Corporation.

The contract or contract option to purchase contains a clause that allows a period of time of sufficient length to enable the Foundation to receive from the City Rent and Rehabilitation Administration a prior opinion on the rental schedule that will be in effect if the contemplated improvements are accomplished. Thus, no properties are acquired nor improvements made until the Foundation is given a reasonable assurance that the investment is economically sound.⁷

Upon completion of the final plans and specifications, the Foundation entertains bids from redevelopers for the performance of the requisite work. Competitive bids are submitted on a cost basis and, when a responsible firm is accepted, the Foundation enters into a contract with the concern to perform the work within the bid price. The contractor is entitled to a reimbursement on a cost basis plus a 10 percent profit and a 5 percent finder's fee.

Prior to title closing, the Foundation presents to investors information related to improvement plans

and specifications, acquisition and rehabilitation costs, and the projected, average rental schedules for each dwelling unit. Investors are then asked to loan the Foundation the necessary funds to close title, purchase the property and undertake the rehabilitation effort. The funds are again evidenced by a non-interest bearing demand note and advanced to the subsidiary operating corporation for the above purposes.

During the rehabilitation phase, and prior to the establishment of new rental schedules, the acquired property is managed by an established real estate concern, which also oversees the execution of the rehabilitation work. Rents collected during this period are used to maintain the building and if possible, reduce the amount of the investors loan to the Foundation. Monies obtained through first mortgage financing are also used to reduce the loan. Investors take title to the property from the C.R.R. Rehabilitation Corporation after the City Rent and Rehabilitation Administration approves the rent increase and permanent mortgaging has been granted. Simultaneously with the transfer of title, the investor executes a 20 year operating lease with the Foundation.⁸ Conventional mortgage sources are utilized by the Foundation to obtain necessary, permanent mortgage financing. Attempts are also to be made to secure appropriate F.H.A. mortgage financing; financing under the provisions of the State Mortgage Facilities Corporation Act and the Mitchell-Lama Act.

Still in its infancy, the concept behind the Foundation represents a unique opportunity to help solve the problems presented by old and early new law tenements. Since efforts to upgrade these structures in Neighborhood Conservation Districts have been unavailing, the Program has asked for priorities in processing appropriate buildings from the Foundation. As of this report, two buildings in Carnegie Hill and one each, in East Harlem and Hamilton-Grange, are under consideration. Hopefully, their acquisition and rehabilitation will signal a major breakthrough in this aspect of the Program's work and perhaps signal a return of responsible owners and sound equity capital to the districts.⁹

Providing Economic Aids and Incentives

Giving real estate advisory services, helping to motivate property owners to improve their buildings,



Rehabilitation work in progress in 2 of the 45 Chelsea brownstones converted under the program's aegis

and attracting new and responsible owners and capital has done or will do much to upgrade housing in at least four of the seven Conservation neighborhoods. Of paramount importance, though, was the need to provide district property owners with the means to carry out moderate rehabilitation projects. As indicated in previous sections, the general unavailability of low cost mortgage money correlated highly with the historical decline of the districts. The experience of the real estate advisory service also confirmed the fact that the economic barriers probably prevented the consummation of a number of moderate rehabilitation projects.

To meet the problem, it was evident that new or modified legislation or administrative actions were required to provide Conservation property owners with the financial means to improve their buildings. Accordingly, the Program sought to overcome economic barriers preventing property improvements beyond the level of code compliance, though under that of major rehabilitation. The tools to be used included low cost municipal loans, loans from a state mortgage pool, abatement and exemption from taxes and F.H.A. mortgage insurance. The Program's experience with each has been mixed.

The Municipal Loan Program

Because of the failure of private financial institutions to grant mortgage money for improvement purposes in districts with a significant portion of minority group members—especially East Harlem, Morningside, Carnegie Hill and Hamilton-Grange—it was hoped that the Municipal Lending Program would be of help to district landlords. Passed in 1959, the act was designed to make direct City loans available to property owners for the rehabilitation of buildings providing housing for low-income families. Administered by the Program's parent body, the Housing and Redevelopment Board, the loans extend for a maximum period of 20 years at 4.5 percent interest.

Unfortunately, the State Legislature drafted the bill in such a manner that it at first had no applicability whatsoever: For instance, one requirement was that, in order to obtain a loan, a landlord had to obtain a certificate of occupancy for the building. Since certificates of occupancy were not issued before 1901, the requirement excluded virtually all old-law tenements, the buildings that would have benefitted most from the legislation. The Legislature was repeatedly asked to revise the act, but no practical relief was forthcoming until April, 1962, when a number of restrictive features were eliminated.¹⁰

Further impeding the implementation of the measure was the fragmentation of administrative responsibility between the Housing and Redevelopment Board and the City Rent and Rehabilitation Administration. In both the 1963 and 1964 sessions of the Legislature, New York State was asked to transfer the program to the rent agency and to extend the loan period to 30 years; on both occasions the Legislature failed to



Besides improving housing conditions, rehabilitation projects increased assessments by over eight million dollars in Chelsea and Bloomingdale

act. Finally, and until the summer of 1963, personnel shortages and procedural rigidities within the Board hampered the processing of applications for the loans.

Because of the explicit and implicit promise of improvement held out by the loan program—and due to the difficulties recounted above—the act stood as a symbol of frustration to the districts until late 1963. This was particularly true in Carnegie Hill where code enforcement had not succeeded in the tenements; the blacklisting of the area by private financial institutions remained in force; and the application of one owner for a \$50,000 municipal loan became enmeshed in red tape and conflicting decisions. As a result, an attempt to use a variety of aids to rehabilitate deteriorating properties on the 98th Street pilot block was impeded, thereby seriously jeopardized relationships between public and private agencies.¹¹

With the resolution of a variety of problems in the fall of 1963, the program began to reach its full potential. A property owner in Hamilton-Grange received a \$120,000 loan to convert a semi-vacant, old law tenement to a modern, family centered building with fourteen self-contained, rent-controlled apartments. With this breakthrough, and the request of the Board to disburse funds at the rate of \$5,000,000 a year, the districts are preparing to take increased advantage of the program.

The State Mortgage Facilities Act

Another possibility for breaking the conventional mortgage barrier in “grey” areas, lay in the provisions of the New York State Mortgage Facilities Act. Passed in 1956, the measure sought to induce forty lending in-

stitutions to create a pool of mortgage money for use by owners of buildings in blighted areas "where it is known to be difficult to obtain mortgages." Theoretically, a maximum of twenty-five million dollars was to have been made available to property owners for rehabilitation purposes. Loans up to 80 percent of the appraised value of the property on completion of the work were to be granted. In practice, less than eight million dollars has been made available and loans have not usually been granted for more than 60 to 65 percent of the rehabilitation costs. While a few buildings in East Harlem and Morningside have received loans, the admittedly limited experience of the Conservation Program with the program has been that it is extremely difficult to obtain funds from the pool, mainly because of the ultra-conservative nature of its administration. Administrative changes brought about in the late spring of 1963 suggest a more liberal administrative atmosphere; one in which the Program hopes to secure a more favorable hearing for eligible owners.

The Tax Exemption and Abatement Program

Another possible improvement aid seemed to be contained in Local Law Number 50, of 1960, which provides tax abatement and tax exemption for rent controlled multiple dwellings where there is an increase in the assessed valuation of a property as a result of the removal of fire or health hazards, due to the installation of central heating or because of moderate or major rehabilitation efforts. Under the act, tax exemption from the increase in the assessed valuation of the property resulting from the improvement is permitted for a period of twelve years. The law also permits abatement of current taxes equal to one third of the reasonable cost of the improvement, with two thirds of the tax abatement inuring to the benefit of tenants through rent reductions. Abatement is allowed at the rate of 8.5 percent per year for a period of nine years. The owner may also receive a rent increase for the improvements from the City Rent and Rehabilitation Administration in accordance with established schedules of rental values. However, the gross amount of the rent increase will be reduced by an amount equal to two-thirds of the tax abatement which is received.

Until recently, the act has had little applicability in Neighborhood Conservation Districts, mainly because there has been virtually no need to install central heating in the area's buildings.¹² Similarly, the removal of code violations has not usually resulted in increases in assessed valuations, and, thus, the related eligibility of the property for tax relief. Due to a lack of information and continued rent control, landlords have not applied for abatement or exemption when major rehabilitation projects have been carried out. This last impediment may be reversed and the program utilized for minor and major rehabilitation purposes, especially in conjunction with the municipal loan and federal mortgage insurance programs. Where this is accomplished, fairly significant rent savings can accrue to residents and the Program's goal of moderate rehabilitation realized to better effect.

Federal Mortgage Insurance

As amended by the 1961 State Legislature, Section 504 of Article 15 of the New York State General Municipal Law provides that Neighborhood Conservation Districts may be designated as areas suitable for urban renewal. Though no direct Federal financial assistance flows from the designation, qualified districts may become eligible for Federal F.H.A. 220 mortgage financing after appropriate plans are accepted by Federal agencies. Institutional lenders granting mortgages to a Conservation property owner will thus receive F.H.A. insurance on the loan, thereby making it possible for lenders to issue mortgages for a term of thirty years or more at relatively low interest rates.

To obtain the non-assisted designations and related benefits, the Program filed informal plans with the New York-New England Regional Office of the Housing and Home Finance Agency in late 1963. Subsequent discussions indicate that Chelsea, Bloomingdale, Hudson and Morningside should qualify, and that F.H.A. will be amenable to granting insurance when processing applications submitted by owners of brownstones and new law tenements, particularly since rehabilitation standards have already been worked out for these structures between F.H.A. and the Housing and Redevelopment Board in connection with rehabilitation projects being carried out in assisted urban renewal areas. In addition, an experimental F.H.A.—

Rent and Rehabilitation Administration Project may be employed in some of the Conservation Districts to test the desirability and feasibility of rehabilitating old-law tenements. If consummated, the various Federal mortgage insurance programs can do much to improve the supply of funds made available to district property owners.

As of the time period covered by this report, the package of financial aids and incentives has not been translated into an effective means of carrying out moderate rehabilitation projects. Nonetheless, recent positive changes in the acts or their administration suggest that the tools can be used to greater advantage in the months and years ahead.¹³

Major Private Rehabilitation

The Program has made one major exception to its policy of encouraging moderate rehabilitation by pressing for the conversion of deteriorated class "B" rooming houses or single-room occupancy buildings to class "A" dwellings with units designed for self-contained, family occupancy. The Program reached this decision only after it became clear that family occupancy in rooming houses and "SRO's" was inherently antithetical to its housing and social goals. This was confirmed when it was noted that code compliance, moderate rehabilitation, tenant education and other programs simply did not work in buildings in which entire families were consigned to one room, sharing with their equally overcrowded neighbors kitchen and bathroom facilities.

In reaching this decision, careful attention was given to the fact that, because of the degree of work involved in converting the buildings, tenants would be displaced. Moreover, the cost of rehabilitating the buildings, coupled with the removal of rent controls, would usually prevent the former residents from re-occupying the rehabilitated structures, if indeed they were willing to return after having obtained apartments elsewhere in the City. Higher income tenants would of necessity move into the rehabilitated buildings, changing the economic, social, racial and ethnic character of the neighborhoods. As a consequence, another of the Program's goals—the maintenance of the neighborhood's population balance—would not be fully realized.

Fortunately, the problems of really "bad" rooming houses and single room occupancy buildings were confined to three districts, and was not in any event so extensive that the reconversions caused a radical alteration in the population of the districts. It was, therefore, decided to encourage some private, major rehabilitation efforts in the districts.¹⁴

Quantitatively, the most extensive private rehabilitation effort occurred in Chelsea. Since the start of its project, 45 of the district's class "B" buildings have been converted to class "A" status. Available financial information reveals that the rehabilitation costs have averaged about \$37,000 per brownstone or about \$7,500 per floor. Assuming the same rehabilitation costs for all of the converted buildings in the district, total rehabilitation expenditures in Chelsea are approximately \$1,665,000. When added to acquisition costs, the investment in Chelsea brownstones is beginning to take on significant proportions. More important, it has resulted in the elimination of almost all of the badly managed and deteriorated rooming houses in the district, and, in conjunction with code enforcement and moderate rehabilitation, cut the proportion of housing units formerly rated to be in a deteriorating or deteriorated condition.

Many of the converted units have been turned into floor-through apartments, some duplexes and at least one triplex, with floor-throughs usually renting in excess of \$225 a month. The remainder have been changed into 1½, 2½, and 3½ room units, their rents ranging from \$100 to \$175 a month. One of the rehabilitation efforts is of special significance. In March, 1961, thirteen property owners on one block in the district banded together, formed a cooperative and acquired two adjoining rooming houses that were the source of serious social and housing problems. Paying \$90,000 for the buildings, they plan major alterations which will provide five, floor-through apartments in each building. To be sold as cooperative under F.H.A. financing, the rehabilitation costs are estimated at \$100,000 for the two buildings. It is hoped that the tenancy of the building will be ethnically and racially mixed, as is the case with a few of the other rehabilitated properties in Chelsea.

The impetus for the conversions is only partially attributable to the Neighborhood Conservation effort. As an article in the *NEW YORK TIMES* pointed out:



Over \$600,000 was spent to convert this Bloomingdale SRO into a family centered building with an open occupancy policy

*"Prospective buyers of Manhattan's vanishing brownstone houses will find them in better supply and at lower prices in the area west of Central Park and in Chelsea."*¹⁵

Noting that available brownstones sell for from \$3,000 to \$4,000 for each foot of the building's frontage on the upper east side and in Murray Hill, and for \$2,000 in Greenwich Village, Chelsea, at \$1,000, became one of Manhattan's most attractive areas for individuals interested in purchasing and reconverting brownstones. The conversion of the Chelsea rooming houses has also been reinforced by the continuing demolition of brownstones elsewhere in the borough and by the fact that owners can usually expect an eight percent re-

turn on their investment after acquiring, remodelling and renting a portion of the buildings. On the other hand, the district can take credit for the fact that much of the rehabilitation in the overall Chelsea area is concentrated in the Conservation District. Thus, while 24 rehabilitation efforts were taking place at one time in the non-expanded, six block Conservation District, only seven buildings were undergoing similar treatment in a similarly sized area immediately to the south.¹⁶

The conversions suggest that the Conservation effort has caused the upgrading of the district to be speeded appreciably, and the normal expansion of Greenwich Village to bypass a part of Chelsea to reach the Conservation District. The same general conclusion

was reached by the Citizens' Housing and Planning Council:

"Conservation's clearest and most tangible objective is to improve the physical conditions of a neighborhood, and primarily in the housing stock. This is usually thought of as preventing further deterioration in basically good neighborhoods, which are the areas for which Conservation was intended. There is no argument that the housing in Chelsea is improving and that the conservation project has played a role in this. However, it is also clear that powerful economic forces are pushing at Chelsea, reflected in such developments as the new building in the area and the residential push up from the Village. The facts do not tell us how much change would have taken place without the project and how much conservation can claim as its own achievement. As a physical upgrader, does conservation have a decisive effect of its own, or does it merely alter the face and color the character of more profound trends? Without implying an answer to this question, it is interesting to note as a piece of evidence that in Chelsea bringing about compliance with mandatory and voluntary improvements may have served as a brake upon the more drastic upgrading to luxury housing which has been occurring in some of the worst buildings as a result of the rising real estate market."

Chelsea's success in reclaiming the neighborhood has been so extensive that it appears to be jeopardizing some of the original goals of the project. As an example, a private developer acquired and demolished 11 adjacent brownstones to erect "a new modern luxury apartment building." To reverse a possible trend towards what one observer described as "east side blight," the Housing and Redevelopment Board sought legislation through which it would have the ability to review and, where indicated, veto private redevelopment efforts in assisted and non-assisted urban renewal areas. The State Legislature would not even entertain the idea. In another direction, the Program has sought public rehabilitation to counter the creation of a silk stocking enclave in Chelsea. In the meantime, it has apprised tenants of their relocation rights and developers of their related obligations.¹⁷

Seventeen rooming houses and single room occupancy buildings and "hotels" have been converted by

private developers since the start of the Bloomingdale venture. Unlike Chelsea, rehabilitation in Bloomingdale has involved a number of high risk structures. This has necessarily entailed a higher level of capital expenditure and an even more significant reversal of the pattern of housing deterioration. As an example, one building which contained 211 single room occupancy units and 16 apartments has been converted to 137, self-contained three and four room apartments at a cost in excess of \$600,000. Renting at an average of \$40 a room a month, the new units have been made available on an open occupancy basis through the cooperative effort of the property owner and the district. The same is true of a third rate hotel, which is being converted into a family centered, multiple dwelling.

Major private rehabilitation in the other districts has shown a mixed pattern. Though relatively young, Hudson has been instrumental in obtaining the conversion or really substantial upgrading of 10 class "B" buildings, a significant rate in comparison to Bloomingdale and Chelsea, though only a beginning in terms of the district's needs and potential. In opposition, only five buildings have been rehabilitated in East Harlem after a four year experience, and none have achieved class "A" status in Morningside, Carnegie Hill or Hamilton-Grange. Private rehabilitation efforts have been prevented in these four changing or predominantly Negro and Puerto Rican neighborhoods by the failure of local financial institutions to provide necessary mortgage financing; the inability of private investors to rehabilitate old and early new law tenements in the absence of effective governmental aids; and the lack of private investment capital, caused to some extent by residential rent control.

Totally 77 class "B" buildings have been converted in the Neighborhood Conservation Districts since the start of the experimental project in August, 1959. This effort marks the City's first major breakthrough in the elimination of hard core problem buildings outside of assisted renewal areas or prime residential neighborhoods. It should be noted that this has been accomplished in areas where there was virtually no impetus for rehabilitation prior to the Program and that literally no governmentally-aided financial assistance has been made available to owners. For good or ill, the conversions have been carried out without recourse to the expensive, time consuming and often-

TABLE 14
MORTGAGE LOANS IN NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
1960-1962

DISTRICT	Value of Total Loans	SOURCE				PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION			
		Bank	Savings & Loan Assoc.	Private And Syndicate Funds	Other	Bank	S&L	P&L	Other
Chelsea	\$1,923,482	\$ 202,000	\$ 120,000	\$1,436,482	\$165,000	10.5%	6.2%	74.7%	8.6%
East Harlem	1,135,316	185,223	20,000	930,093	—	16.3	1.8	81.9	—
Bloomingdale	5,716,103	1,018,710	2,045,694	2,651,699	—	17.8	35.8	46.4	—
Hudson	6,672,834	3,254,576	827,707	2,590,551	—	48.8	12.4	38.8	—
Morningside	135,900	51,500	—	84,400	—	37.9	—	62.1	—
Carnegie Hill	1,477,898	879,965	180,000	417,933	—	59.5	12.2	28.3	—
Hamilton-Grange	702,029	80,662	75,100	546,267	—	11.5	10.7	77.8	—
TOTALS	\$17,763,562	\$5,672,636	\$3,268,501	\$8,657,425	\$165,000	31.9%	18.4%	48.7%	1.0%

SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAM

times divisive process of formal physical planning. Though expensive to tenants and landlords alike, private major rehabilitation has had the value of maintaining and improving the integrity of the physical character of the neighborhoods and serving as a spur to the overall process of community betterment.

One of the causes, as well as the effects of rehabilitation has been that of increasing the supply of mortgage money in the older district. In Chelsea, \$85,560 in mortgage funds was made available to district property owners between 1958 and 1960. Between 1960 and 1962, \$1,923,482 was put at their disposal for acquisition and improvement purposes. In Bloomingdale, mortgage loans advanced from 2.2 to 5.7 million dollars during the same time period. Even in East Harlem the value of the loans increased tenfold, from \$108,000 to \$1,135,000, all of which would seem inconceivable in the absence of the Program.

Interestingly, the increase in the supply of mortgage money was not the result of a change in heart on the part of local banks and savings and loans associations who, of course, provide the vast majority of mortgage money outside of "grey" areas. As recorded in Table 14, almost half of the mortgage loans granted in the district between 1960 and 1962 came from private, syndicate or institutional sources. Particularly in East Harlem, Morningside, Hamilton-Grange, there is no evidence whatsoever to refute charges that banks and savings and loans associations are in part motivated by racial and ethnic prejudice in granting mortgage loans.

The existing mortgage barrier in "grey" areas has meant increased improvement costs to property owners, which are eventually borne by residents through higher rents. It has also engendered some antipathy on the part of residents toward local branches of banks and

savings and loan associations. Ironically enough, the myopia of neighborhood financial institutions has resulted in a loss to them of sound investment opportunities. For instance, a mortgage officer of an up-state bank that has been investing heavily in one district pleaded with staff "not to tell the local banks what is going on around here. It's too good to be true." The pattern suggests the need for remedial legislation and

appropriate policy and administrative actions at the highest levels of government and banking.

A most important effect of private rehabilitation projects has been that of radically increasing the tax revenues which the City derives from heretofore declining neighborhoods. This has been particularly true of Chelsea and Bloomingdale, as shown in the following table:

TABLE 15
ASSESSED AND TAXABLE VALUATIONS AND TAX REVENUES

CHELSEA CONSERVATION DISTRICT			
Tax			
Assessment	1959-1960	1963-1964	CHANGE
Land	\$10,549,500	\$11,684,200	+\$1,134,700
Buildings	13,299,500	15,218,900	+ 1,919,400
TOTAL	\$23,849,000	\$26,903,100	+\$3,054,100
Tax Paid	\$ 1,011,200	\$ 1,140,690	+\$ 129,490
BLOOMINGDALE CONSERVATION DISTRICT			
Assessed and			
Taxable	1959-1960	1963-1964	CHANGE
Land	\$20,289,000	\$19,999,000	—\$ 290,000
Buildings	33,197,800	38,441,000	+ 5,243,200
TOTAL	\$53,486,800	\$58,440,000	+\$4,953,200
Tax Paid	\$ 2,267,840	\$ 2,477,860	+\$ 210,020

Depicting changes in the assessments of land, building and the total valuation of properties prior to and following the start of Neighborhood Conservation in the two areas, the table shows that assessed valuations have increased by over eight million dollars in three fiscal years. In reading the table, it should be noted that the increases were achieved without the con-

struction of any new buildings and, in the case of Bloomingdale, in the face of the loss of eleven buildings which were removed from the tax roles as the result of Housing Authority acquisitions.¹⁸

Because of the improvements, the City has realized a net increase in taxes from Chelsea of \$129,490 a year and \$210,020 from Bloomingdale, or a total of

\$339,440. Tax increases in the two districts are, thus, almost twice the amount of money which is appropriated by New York City, through grant-in-aid contracts, to all seven districts. When added to savings to the Department of Welfare as a result of rent reductions brought about by the districts; direct savings to the Department of Welfare in rent reductions following relocation of public assistance recipients; and fines levied against recalcitrant property owners, the Conservation districts are not only completely self-sustaining but probably offset indirect expenditures made by other municipal agencies cooperating in the venture. As Conservation matures in the other districts and rehabilitation ventures are given impetus through the more effective functioning of federally and municipally-aided mortgage financing programs, tax revenues should increase appreciably each year and for succeeding years.¹⁹

Major Public Rehabilitation

Of necessity, private rehabilitation has meant the displacement of low and the attraction of middle and high income residents to the districts, thus partially destroying the previous economic, racial and ethnic make-up of the areas. Reversing a previous trend, the movement back into the areas of middle class families has had both positive and negative values, of which the possible re-creation of all-white, middle-class enclaves was the most pernicious.

A countervailing influence was called into motion when, on March 9, 1960, the New York City Housing Authority requested the City Planning Commission to approve plans to acquire two, back-to-back, single room occupancy buildings on Manhattan's Upper West Side. In asking for approval of this pilot project, the Authority stated that it was undertaking a program to "... break through to the problem of slum buildings ... by eliminating single room occupancy structures in the City." The Program also marked a more diversified approach to the problem of deteriorated housing on the part of New York City. Rather than demolishing the two prototype buildings, they were to be completely rehabilitated for occupancy by low-income families. In the words of one commentator: "The Housing Authority was about to create addresses, not projects."

To launch this public, multiple-dwelling rehabilitation effort, the Housing Authority chose buildings in the Bloomingdale Conservation District. One reason for the selection was the wide acceptance of the proposal in the community, as evidenced by the following abbreviated testimony of one community leader before the City Planning Commission:

"This building was without doubt, as the result of years of neglect, the worst building in our area . . . It was a terrible example of the evil of single-room occupancy . . . Inspection by the Building Department disclosed over one hundred and fifty violations and conditions were so bad that the Welfare Department vacated all Welfare tenants . . . Criminal proceedings were instituted against the owner and the lessee resulting in substantial fines . . . rents were reduced by fifty percent. Nonetheless the evils of this building . . . have extended beyond the confines of its own walls and infected an entire neighborhood. The conditions in this building . . . contributed to the blight of the neighboring brownstones . . . We regard the proposed action by the City Housing Authority as a significant step forward in the improvement of our neighborhood. We believe that the rehabilitation of this blighted building . . . will encourage other owners to further improve their properties. We, therefore, heartily endorse the proposed action by the City Housing Authority and recommend approval by the City Planning Commission."

The endorsement of public housing by the middle-class residents of Bloomingdale was in large part the result of increased community participation and interest which had been awakened by Conservation. Prior to the Program, residents of the neighborhood had rejected even the suggestion that public housing west of Broadway could solve some of the ills of the community. As the Program developed, it became clear to the neighborhood that, in those cases where property owners failed to take the action needed to improve their buildings, public rehabilitation or clearance programs might represent the community's best chance of eliminating blight. Moreover, since open occupancy is guaranteed in public or publicly-assisted housing, the neighborhood saw that it could simultaneously remove slum buildings while insuring the continuation of a racially and economically integrated neighborhood.

Following the acquisition of the two single room



"Addresses", not projects, were created by the Housing Authority through this rehabilitation effort in Bloomingdale

occupancy buildings, the Housing Authority took title to six deteriorated brownstones. Since the structures were adjacent, the Authority formulated plans to rehabilitate the buildings as a single development. Later in the year, it also moved to acquire another single room occupancy building west of Broadway, bringing to nine the number of Bloomingdale buildings to be rehabilitated by the Authority as federally-aided, low rent housing developments.

All were structurally sound, though in varying states of disrepair and neglect when they were first examined by inspectional personnel. All were plagued by serious overcrowding problems. In one, for example, seventy-eight families—some containing as many as nine members—shared a total of six kitchens and twelve bathrooms. All were badly maintained, as revealed by initial Buildings and Health inspections.

All were beset by serious social problems, including narcotics addiction, alcoholism and prostitution. Their tenants made major contributions to the crime and delinquency rates of the neighborhood, as well as to the general lack of cleanliness of the streets and sidewalks fronting the structures.

In keeping with the Conservation concept, every effort was made to bring the buildings up to safe, sound and sanitary conditions. Illegally overcrowded families were relocated. Multi-problem families were referred to cooperating social, health and welfare agencies. Police protection and sanitation services were augmented. Violations were relayed to owners and assistance in removing them proffered. When remedial action was not taken, the landlords were subjected to a campaign of publicity, maximum fines and jail sentences for code violations, as well as rent reduc-

tions. In two cases, changes in ownership were effected. However, by March 1960, it was clear that none of the actions would bring about the desired results. A more radical solution was needed to solve the buildings' problems. It was with this background that Bloomingdale heartily endorsed the Housing Authority's rehabilitation plans.

As originally envisaged, the West 103rd-104th Street rehabilitation project was to have been completed within a year. A number of problems intervened, causing delays in the schedule. Approval of the plans and project by the governmental agencies involved—the New York City Housing Authority, the Federal Public Housing Authority, the City Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate—was not fully obtained for all the buildings until late 1960, perhaps not surprising in what was a precedent shattering experiment. Negotiations for the purchase of the properties was slower than at first expected, merely because one owner instituted a test case of the Authority's power to acquire properties for rehabilitation purposes. Rightfully delaying the project was the work of the previously cited task force of the Department of Welfare, which was assigned to work with the multi-problem families in the buildings in order to prepare them for relocation to standard housing.

All of these problems were solved by December, 1960, at which time plans and specifications for the rehabilitation project were announced and bids for the work invited. The latter were opened on March 28, 1961 and found to be well in excess of the projected costs: \$773,619, as against an estimated \$650,000. The Housing Authority was compelled to reject the bids, at the same time instructing architects to prepare new plans. Thereafter, the project moved forward more rapidly, with occupancy taking place in the spring and early summer of 1962. As a result of the effort, seventy-two public housing units have been made available in the 103rd-104th Street project, with an additional forty units on 101st Street. One and one-half, two, three and four-room units have been provided at rents ranging from \$14 to \$16 a room a month. Even with the delays, the venture was finished in less time, and at less costs than an equivalent number of new public housing units. Public housing in Bloomingdale had the related value of providing good housing that blends into the fabric of the neighbor-

hood; because of this, the residents had not been identified as living in a "project," which has also been of benefit to the image of public housing.

Faced with equally serious deterioration in some of their buildings, Morningside and Chelsea have asked for public rehabilitation of adjacent brownstones; Hudson and Bloomingdale of individual, single room occupancy structures; and Carnegie Hill and Hamilton-Grange of old-law tenements. Lacking authorization for new starts and severely restricted by unit cost formula, the Authority was unable to obtain Federal assistance. It therefore turned to the State for aid but found that rehabilitation costs—ranging from \$21,042 per dwelling unit in the Chelsea brownstones to \$26,900 per dwelling unit in the Carnegie Hill tenements—were thought to be excessive by the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal. Passage of current Federal and State housing legislation and the easing of restrictions will, hopefully, allow the districts to use public rehabilitation to solve housing problems beyond the province of private enterprise, at the same time gaining the psychological, social and economic benefits already in evidence in Bloomingdale.

Public Redevelopment

Two other buildings in Bloomingdale caused problems similar to the ones outlined above and, like the nine buildings slated for rehabilitation, did not lend themselves to routine inspectional and upgrading treatment. It was doubtful, too, that private investors would become interested in redeveloping the sites. Unlike the buildings slated for rehabilitation, they were not structurally sound. Demolition and new construction were indicated. Since the community and the Authority wanted to avoid mass relocation, one of the City's first ventures into "vest-pocket" public housing was initiated, as the following case study relates:

"It's a rat ranch, your Honor. It would appear they're breeding rats."

These were the words used by an Assistant Corporation Counsel in May, 1961, to describe some of the conditions in the Armstrong "Hotel." Located near the southwest corner of 103rd Street and Amsterdam Avenue, the building housed 440 persons—including 260 children under 12—in 49 apartments and 108 single rooms. Crowded 4, 5 and 6 to a room, the occupants

of the building presented other Bloomingdale residents with a host of problems ever since the building was converted to a single-room occupancy in 1950. Off limits to members of the Armed Forces, the hotel's crime rate was almost unbelievable: During one six-month period, for instance, the police made twenty-two arrests in or near the "hotel" in connection with one rape, eleven felonious assaults, three acts of grand larceny, one case of burglary and five, each, acts of third degree assault and disorderly conduct.

Paralleling the social problems were those of a physical nature. Between November, 1956 and August, 1960, 449 building violations were reported. Fires, averaging one a week during the summer of 1960, were partially attributed to the presence of an arsonist, as well as to the maintenance of the building. Health, Sanitation and Water Supply, Gas and Electricity violations were equally as prevalent and serious. Perhaps even worse, the building was owned and operated by a concern which "... appears to have completely abrogated its legal responsibility to comply with the laws in (an) effort to milk this deplorable property ... " Milk it they did, to the tune of \$130,000 a year prior to rent reconrol and reductions effected in December, 1959. Even then, the property brought in \$65,000 a year.

Candidly, the building presented problems which were beyond Bloomingdale's ability to solve. It would have been impossible to decongest the Armstrong in anything resembling a reasonable time period. Without relocating overcrowded families, in turn, no real progress would be made in solving the problems affecting the building. The social problems prevalent in the "hotel" could only be met by a special task force of social workers, home economists and other trained personnel. The Department of Welfare had organized such a unit but it was grappling with the problems presented by multi-problem families in the West 103rd Street Housing Authority rehabilitation projects and could not cover the Armstrong before June, 1961. Finally, there was no indication whatsoever that the owners of the building would in any way cooperate in upgrading the building. There was, on the other hand, every indication that they would use every possible device to avoid their legal, to say nothing of their moral responsibility towards the building and its tenants.

Accordingly, Bloomingdale welcomed the proposal put forward by the Housing Authority in March, 1960 to acquire the Armstrong and four adjoining old-law tenements on Amsterdam Avenue; demolish the structures and, on the site erect a fifteen story, 130 unit, state-aided addition to Douglass Houses. Residents of the community testified in favor of acquisition before the Planning Commission in October, 1960, at which time the plan and project were approved. Bloomingdale looked forward to early acquisition but delays occasioned by negotiations to acquire the properties—and slowness in approval of the project by the New York State Division of Housing—put off Board of Estimate action until May 11, 1961.

During the acquisition period, and though it seems impossible, conditions in the Armstrong "deteriorated." The building had become a real menace to its residents and the neighborhood as a whole. With summer coming, and Housing Authority title vesting not slated until July, 1961, Bloomingdale asked for reinspections by the Buildings and Health Departments. The former uncovered over 500 violations of its laws while the latter's inspections revealed over 200 code violations. These included three dead rats in public areas and occasioned the "rat ranch" remark of the Assistant Corporation Counsel. Proceedings were instituted to reduce rents, which the Rent Commission had recently raised to \$112,000.00 yearly. Judicial proceedings were started for Health and Building violations in Criminal Court and the most stringent penalties were imposed. The final solution to the problems raised by the Armstrong will occur, however, when the 130 families take occupancy of the one, two, three and four-bedroom apartments in the project sometime in 1964.²⁰

Publicly-Assisted and Private Redevelopment

Rounding out the Program's effort to provide better housing in the districts was the attempt to gain new accommodations on vacant or under-utilized land. Acting as catalysts for such projects, Conservation staff pushed for two publicly-aided housing developments. Both are instructive:

In keeping with its objective of securing diversified housing for the community it serves, Hudson Guild

formulated plans in December, 1960 to meet the housing needs of the elderly citizens of the area. To accomplish this, the Guild selected a site within the Chelsea Conservation District consisting of vacant and underutilized plots. The major criteria used in the selection were the adverse use of properties on the site—three were rooming houses—and the lack of a major relocation problem—two of the buildings were vacant. After site selection, Hudson Guild applied to the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency for the City's first apartment house for the aged to be built under Section 202 of the 1954 Housing Act.

In March, Hudson Guild received a commitment from the Federal Government for a fifty-year, \$495,000.00 loan at 3.5 percent interest. Under terms of Section 202 of the Housing Act, the loan would have met 98 percent of the project's costs, with the Guild, a non-profit corporation, providing the rest. As planned, a ten-story building would have been constructed, consisting of 40 efficiency and three-room suites. Rents were to range from \$55 to \$85 a month, with priorities in applications going to elderly residents of Chelsea. Unfortunately, acquisition and construction costs precluded the consummation of the project. Mitchell-Lama housing was then suggested, but could not be brought in for less than \$33.00 a room a month, which is beyond the rent ceiling established for middle-income housing in New York City.

Bloomingdale is receiving over 300 units of rehabilitated or new public housing. While meeting the needs of the area's lower income citizens, the units do not answer the housing demands of the district's middle-income residents. To accomplish this, district staff began to explore sites for the possible construction of a Mitchell-Lama project, New York City's middle-income housing program.

As in the case of Chelsea's housing for the aged, Bloomingdale sought to minimize the relocation burden and correct housing deterioration in selecting a site for the middle income housing project. Both goals were theoretically realized with the choice of a 42,725 square foot area consisting of a frame building, a one-story "taxpayer," three low grade hotels, eleven rooming houses, two old-law tenements and one "kitchenette." Their adverse use may be seen in the fact that only ten of the 253 units on the site were being utilized for self-contained family occupancy. Similarly, there are

only 230 households on the site, a relatively small relocation load. More important, only 23 of the 230 households had children. Of the remaining 207, 152 were one person and 55 were two person households.²¹

Following the planning stages of the projects, a responsible developer became interested in sponsoring a cooperative for the site. He formulated plans calling for the erection of a 20-story building containing 200 apartments, 2 professional apartments, 12,250 square feet of store space, and off-street parking accommodations for 80 cars. The apartments were to sell for an estimated \$667 down-payment per room, with estimated carrying charges of \$28.40 per room per month. The sponsor estimated that ninety percent of construction costs would be covered by a direct City loan at a 3.5 percent interest rate over a 40-year period. A formal application for approval of the project was submitted to the Planning Commission in May, 1961. As of April, 1964, no action had been taken. An analysis of the project by the Housing and Redevelopment Board indicated that carrying charges would be above \$30 a room a month, or outside of the ideal cost ranges for Mitchell-Lama projects. It was this consideration which has held up approval.

In the absence of tax exemption in excess of fifty percent, the economics of property acquisition and new construction in Manhattan seem to preclude the development of middle income housing in Neighborhood Conservation Districts, which do not qualify for Title I land acquisition and write-down benefits. As a consequence, new construction, which has not been undertaken in the seven neighborhoods since the late twenties, has been restricted to private developers, whose developments rent at a minimum of \$40 a room a month. This appears to hold in Hudson, even though its first new high rise building in recent years was financed with F.H.A. funds and replaced a vacant warehouse. In Bloomingdale, plans which have been filed for the construction of a religious institution and home for the aged do not suggest that the needs of middle income residents will be met by the project, as is the case with the previously cited luxury development in Chelsea. It would seem then, that the three developments will attract high income residents to the districts, as well as indicating a possible reversal of orthodox real estate opinions about the future of the three neighborhoods. If so, and if not carried to the illogical

extremes of the private redevelopment on Manhattan's East Side, this may well indicate a further resurgence of the areas, much of which can be attributed to the

public and private, minor and major rehabilitation and redevelopment projects that have already been consummated in Chelsea, Bloomingdale and Hudson.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Over the two year period, total costs for the service was \$54,325.

² The reorganization was accomplished in October, 1962. Dispensing with the fee basis for individual inspections, the reorganizations allowed the Program to employ three experienced real estate consultants and, thus, overcome the lack of staff which had been one of the deterrents to the best possible functioning of the service. The recasting of the service also allowed better coordination between building upgrading and code enforcement efforts in the districts and provided some property owners with cost estimates of the work recommended by the consultants. Most important of all, the change allowed reinspections to be made on a systematic basis and insured necessary follow-ups, which helped to induce a number of property owners to make the indicated improvements.

³ Rewiring and installing new plumbing bring automatic increases. The other recommendations usually do not bring increases, save in those circumstances where tenants consent to the change.

⁴ More precise analysis is needed to determine the exact weight of the many variables which are of significance in the decision to undertake property improvements.

⁵ In contrast is the continuing complaint of some districts that the service does not utilize the knowledge of local staff about the building and its owners in advancing recommendations. This appears to be a conflict between the management orientation of the consultants and the tenant orientation of district staff.

⁶ NEW YORK TIMES, September 19, 1961. The Foundation also sought to provide investors with a reasonable profit on their investments, including certain tax advantages. A collateral objective was that of providing expert real estate management for the rehabilitated buildings.

⁷ To secure a return on investment of eight to ten percent, the Foundation negotiates with the Tax Commission to keep the assessed valuation of the property at the lowest possible level, seeks tax exemption and abatement; and applies earnings to reduce outstanding indebtedness.

⁸ It was expected that the lease will provide for a five year term, with successive five year options running for a maximum of 20 years. The lease usually provides for an 8 to 10 percent profit to the investor or his nominee. The remainder of the profit goes towards the reduction of rents; to cover management costs; and the administrative expenses of the Foundation.

⁹ During the initial phase of its operation, the Foundation acquired two old law tenements on the lower East Side. Rehabilitation costs averaged \$3,500 a unit. As a consequence, rents doubled. The work was accompanied by some complaints from tenants related to the discomfort caused by the rehabilitation work.

¹⁰ The Legislature did not correct one of the major faults of the act, which provides that tenants whose income exceeds rentals by seven times must be displaced from buildings receiving the loan. To counter this, the Board is developing, within the law, a more flexible income formula. It is also resolving problems associated with the establishment of rental values with the active cooperation of the City Rent and Rehabilitation Administration.

¹¹ Other barriers to the package are discussed elsewhere in this chapter. In addition, the unexplained cancellation of a key meeting between the district steering body and City officials, and the redevelopment plans of Mt. Sinai Hospital halted building upgrading efforts in the district.

¹² In Area Services Districts, particularly on the lower east side, lack of central heating is a problem and the tax exemption and abatement program has been used extensively.

¹³ Many of these same problems will face the Board in its administration of the five, recently designated, assisted urban renewal (rehabilitation) areas. Their resolution in these areas and the play-back to the Conservation Districts should be of special benefit to the Program.

¹⁴ As a matter of fact and law, the Program could not have discouraged such conversions even if it had pursued such a policy.

¹⁵ This article, which appeared in a May, 1961 Sunday real estate section of the *Times*, undoubtedly did much to spur the purchase of rooming houses in Chelsea and was, thus, probably a factor contributing to the rehabilitation of brownstones in the Conservation District.

¹⁶ While the areas were comparable in size and land use and, in the late fifties, were equally deteriorating, the dynamics of Conservation and the selection of a part of the southern portion for public housing makes comparisons difficult. On the other hand, there is no other six block area in Chelsea that is even roughly comparable to the Conservation District, hence its use.

¹⁷ Because of the displacement of minority group members and the resultant high rents—and regardless of the ability of the Program to exercise control over rehabilitation and redevelopment ventures—the Chelsea project was severely criticized by a number of local organizations. One, for instance, alleged that “Chelsea is finding that Neighborhood Conservation means the green light to real estate speculators who would like to turn Chelsea into another Yorkville or Greenwich Village.”

¹⁸ Since land values have been declining in the Bloomingdale District, the increased valuations can only be attributed to the effects of major rehabilitation. Land values in the “old” section of Bloomingdale decreased by 20 percent during the time period, while those in the “new” sector fell by only one percent, due to its proximity to a new middle-income housing development. Whatever the data, the point is that owners in the “old” part of Bloomingdale upgraded their properties after Conservation went into effect, while those in the “new” section did not. Now that the area below 100th Street has become a part of the district, it will be interesting to watch the effects of Conservation on building valuations there. If they increase substantially, it would appear that Conservation would have to be given major credit for the occurrence. Of course, more refined analysis is needed to establish these relationships.

¹⁹ Unlike a number of other widely-heralded, experimental projects in New York City, Neighborhood Conservation therefore seems to be economically feasible and, as a consequence, exportable.

²⁰ The other building evidenced the same general problems, as well as financial ones for the owner. Redevelopment will create 156 low-cost units which should be occupied in the spring of 1965.

²¹ The majority of the residents are white, which should also belie possible charges that redevelopment of the site will entail minority group clearance.

Chapter 7

BETTERING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

One goal of the Conservation Program was that of bettering the general physical environment of neighborhoods through the more effective utilization of municipal and local resources. In this connection, the Program directed its attention to gaining increased street lighting; cleaner streets, sidewalks and buildings; the planting of trees; improved uses of vacant lots; and the repair and re-surfacing of thoroughfares. It also sought to improve traffic conditions and upgrade community facilities. Conservation pursued these objectives in the belief that these actions contributed in some measure to more wholesome neighborhoods and, taken together, could do much to improve the overall setting of "grey" communities.

Relighting The Neighborhood

At the initial East Harlem property owners meeting, several speakers addressed themselves to the problem of inadequate street lighting on the pilot block and throughout the remaining portions of the district. Some residents attributed increases in crime and delinquency in the area—and certainly the increased fear of crime and delinquency—to poor lighting, which purportedly allowed some perpetrators of criminal or anti-social acts to go unobserved or unheeded. Within a short period of time, 50 mercury vapor lamps had been installed to replace the neighborhood's outmoded lighting system. Whether or not crime and delinquency decreased as a result of the more powerful lights is not known. Fear certainly did.¹

East Harlem's 50 were among the 400 new lights installed in the seven districts since the start of the Conservation Program. Supplied by the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, the more powerful lights represent a fulfillment of an inter-agency agreement to give priority to the districts in the Department's overall program of relighting New York City. At a cost of \$85,000, the mercury vapor lamps represent a fairly

substantial outlay on the part of New York City and a visible affirmation of its stake in reclaiming "grey" areas. When completed—78 additional lights are scheduled to be installed—much of the greyness will have been eliminated from the neighborhoods, though the location of the fixtures, adequate maintenance and the lack of lights on buildings still represent somewhat of a problem to residents.

Cleaner Neighborhoods

Prior to the Conservation effort, one of the major complaints of residents was that the neighborhoods were littered with dirt, trash, refuse and discarded household articles. A fairly high percentage of the district's residents and superintendents were rated poor in terms of garbage disposal practices. In some instances, vacant lots resembled junk piles. Garbage pails oftentimes overflowed into streets which appeared to be sprinkled rarely, if ever. Newcomers—who were used to the garbage disposal methods of insular or southern rural areas—were charged with a variety of insanitary practices, the most notable of which was the tendency to dispose of refuse via the airborne, "or out-of-the-window" route.

In June, 1960 a comprehensive agreement covering sanitation services was reached between the Program and the Department of Sanitation. Its aim was to secure cleaner streets, sidewalks, lots and buildings in the seven neighborhoods. Under the agreement, each area was guaranteed garbage collections at least five and possibly six times a week, as well as daily street flushings, extra pick-ups of discarded materials and additional litter baskets. Closer departmental supervision of the district was promised; sanitary patrolmen assigned to the inspectional teams; and the use of the Department's educational services invited.

To supplement the agreement, the districts undertook ancillary projects. In Bloomingdale, volunteers were assigned to help educate tenants in better sanitary practices; school children were informed by their

Footnotes for this chapter are on page 133.



Building Inspector speaks at a superintendents meeting in Chelsea, as part of the "Clean-Up-Fix-Up" campaign in the district

teachers of the importance of proper garbage disposal habits; the Department of Welfare was asked to provide its clients with more adequate facilities for garbage disposal; and particularly troublesome buildings and stores were placed under rigid surveillance by sanitary patrolmen. Additionally, a Sanitation sound truck was dispatched to the area to stress the importance of good sanitation practices; sanitation education became an integral part of Bloomingdale's "family program;" and summonses for violations of appropriate sections of the Health Code were issued with greater frequency. Other programs gave some help to families indulging in deleterious housekeeping and sanitation practices.

Chelsea took a different approach. Utilizing bilingual leaflets, information vehicles from the Fire and Sanitation Departments and tenant meetings, staff and

residents organized "Clean-Up-Fix-Up" campaigns in the district. Typically, building superintendents and residents were organized into committees that swept down stoops and sidewalks, scrubbed steps and areaways and painted curbs. Usually marked by an air of festivity, the campaigns resulted in a noticeable improvement in the area's cleanliness, as well as helping to engender a sense of neighborhood pride and more positive intergroup relations. In Morningside, special emphasis was placed on the repair of party fences and a clean-up of backyards, cellars and the public areas of buildings. This campaign was conducted for a month, coordinated with inspectional activities and meshed with the Departments' on-going activities in the neighborhood. Beginning in the spring of 1963, staff relinquished its planning and organizational duties to the

recently formed, resident-directed Morningside Neighborhood Council, which now takes responsibility for the drive on a continuing basis.

The results of the sanitation program are capsuled in the following typical reports of district staff:

" . . . men sweeping, emptying vacant lot every few days without pressing them . . . 4 new litter baskets added recently, streets flushed regularly."

" . . . Since June, 1960, 16 litter baskets placed on streets—old furniture, etc. picked up every Thursday without calling."

"We find collection good . . . broom cleaning of the streets has proved to be far more effective than mechanical sweeping."

" . . . Working closely with inspectors. Not enough pick-ups of old furniture and rubbish. Should improve."

Also helping in this aspect of the neighborhood improvement has been the decongestion of overcrowded buildings and the Sanitation Department's own campaign, "A Cleaner New York Is Up To You." Nonetheless, there is room for improvement. During some periods, districts have been without full sanitation services because of mechanical failures in street-cleaning equipment or the redeployment of sanitation patrolmen; almost all have complained at one time or another about the sloppy collection of garbage. One district has had its sanitation services curtailed from six to five days a week and another was faced for a time with an adverse change in garbage-collection schedules, both apparently due to departmental manpower shortages. The failure of the Police Department to strictly enforce no-parking regulations in some districts, particularly Carnegie Hill, has oftentimes seriously hampered street cleaning operations. Particularly in Bloomingdale and Hudson, littering on major thoroughfares is a serious problem, one that must be met by night-time and weekend inspections of retail establishments, as well as appropriate pressures on recalcitrant shopkeepers. Most important, neither the Department nor residents have had the techniques or facilities to cope with the changes in packaging and consumer buying practices that are at the root of the current sanitation problems in the seven neighborhoods. All in all, the districts are distinctly cleaner; compare very favorably with similar neighborhoods; and should continue to improve in sanitation practices in the months ahead.

Trees and Vacant Lots

Another improvement in the outward appearance of neighborhoods occurs when trees are planted and vacant lots cleaned and put to more appropriate uses. Morningside took the lead in tree planting. Through a \$40,000 donation from the estate of Mrs. Florina Lasker, approximately 400 London Plane trees were planted in the district and in surrounding areas of southwest Harlem. Besides beautifying the area, the trees also served as a vehicle for initiating and then strengthening the district's community organization efforts. Here, as elsewhere, municipal departments cooperated with staff and residents in the project. The Department of Parks planted and is overseeing the maintenance of the trees, while the dedication ceremony itself was an integral part of the Department of Public Events "Salute to the Seasons" program. Local schools participated in the ceremony and formed student groups to help protect the development of the trees.

In Carnegie Hill, Bloomingdale, Hudson and Chelsea less ambitious but equally significant tree planting programs are underway. In each case, special committees were formed which raised money from property owners and residents to plant trees on pilot blocks and other streets in the districts. As in Morningside, these efforts were also designed to bring residents together to participate in other building and block improvement projects.²

Soon after its inauguration, Carnegie Hill turned its attention to a refuse strewn vacant lot on East 98th Street between Park and Madison Avenues. Long an eyesore to neighborhood residents, it served as an adverse gathering place for teenagers. To help correct conditions, staff brought together neighborhood residents to explore constructive uses of the lot. The participants, who subsequently formed themselves into a "Vacant Lot Committee," agreed that it should be converted into a "quiet" play area for small children and eventually leased from its owner, the Department of Real Estate. They also agreed that Carnegie Hill and local groups should take out liability insurance; dissuade older youngsters from using the lot to play stickball; obtain adequate lighting to insure its proper use at night; and eventually, develop the area into a facility for residents of the entire district.

In attempting to fulfill these objectives, Conservation staff arranged for the Manhattan Borough President's Office to grade and pave the lot, obtained a sandbox from the Department of Parks but was unable to secure needed benches, shrubbery or adequate lighting for the facility. Even though handicapped, the lot was opened in late July, 1961, following a meeting with over 100 neighborhood youngsters. During the summer, story-telling hours were held, though the children usually engaged in unsupervised recreational activities. Currently, plans are underway to develop a recreational and educational program for the residents who will use its facilities. Morningside and Hamilton-Grange are starting analogous projects, with the latter seeking to convert a city-owned lot into a miracle garden that will be overseen by the youth of that neighborhood.³

Repaving The Neighborhood

East 115th Street between Third and First Avenues was in almost total disrepair when East Harlem launched its first building inspections. Debris from the recently completed Jefferson Houses littered the street, which was badly eroded and punctuated by sizeable holes. The sidewalk was in similar disrepair and constituted an additional hazard to the residents of the project and district. Action was needed to remove this eyesore and show residents of the pilot block that New York City was itself a good housekeeper.

Acting under prior Board of Estimate approval, the Office of the Chief Engineer of the Manhattan Borough President's Office began to widen and resurface the street. Within a few weeks, a broad, shining thoroughfare was created between First and Second Avenues. Men and machinery were seemingly ready to complete the block between Second and Third Avenues, or so staff thought as they left for home on a Friday night in the summer of 1960. By Monday morning it was apparent that "somebody goofed." The machinery and manpower had been withdrawn. In comparison with the newly-surfaced street, the unpaved block looked battle-damaged. Residents were visibly upset when they learned that no immediate plans had been made to complete the job.

As in other cases, the central staff was asked to intercede with the governmental units responsible for

taking the needed action: in this case, the Borough President's Office, the City Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate. An agreement was quickly reached to expedite the resurfacing of the street and final approval of the plan was obtained in early November, 1960. Unfortunately cold weather intervened and resurfacing was not fully accomplished until April, 1961. Nonetheless, the \$300,000 project did much to improve the morale of pilot block home owners and residents, as well as demonstrating the Program's ability to gain priorities in municipal services.

In the fall of 1963, the Program began to receive the inspectional and related services of the newly-created Department of Highways, which a year before assumed the previous jurisdiction of the Borough President's Office for the repair and maintenance of the City's streets and sidewalks. Under the inter-agency agreement, departmental inspectors notify district property owners of their obligation to repair or completely resurface their sidewalks and inform them that, failing this, the Department will undertake the work, recovering the expenses through a tax lien. Asked to cooperate by district office, a number of property owners—particularly in Hudson, Bloomingdale and Chelsea—have taken the necessary corrective measures. Through private or public action—the latter being delayed at times because of a lack of resources—it is anticipated that thoroughfares within the districts should be in exemplary condition in the near future.

Traffic Conditions

In keeping with its pragmatic, non-assisted approach to neighborhood problems, the Neighborhood Conservation Program has not attempted to bring about radical changes in the traffic patterns of the districts. No effort has been made to permanently close streets or divert traffic to other thoroughfares. On the other hand, the districts have been concerned with the traffic safety problems, bringing them to the attention of the Department of Traffic and the Police Department. As a result, Bloomingdale was able to gain a traffic light at a heavily traversed approach to Riverside Park. Morningside requested and obtained new "red international" signs for one of its streets following a number of accidents at the particular intersection. Carnegie Hill, in cooperation with the Police and Sanitation De-

partments, launched a program that caused a major fall-off in illegal parking. It has also requested the installation of traffic lights on one of its principal streets in order to decrease the speed of cars which used this route and jeopardized the safety of neighborhood youngsters. Chelsea is seeking some means to cope with arterial truck traffic that virtually isolates it from adjoining residential neighborhoods.

As with trees, vacant lots and street and sidewalk improvement efforts, the changes effected in traffic conditions have been of significant value to neighborhood residents and have done much to alleviate the petty annoyances that become major neighborhood problems.

Community Facilities

Directly linking the physical and social objectives of Conservation has been the effort to improve local community facilities. Early in the Program's history, it became obvious that new or refurbished parks, playgrounds and other public facilities were needed to meet the educational, recreational and cultural needs of area residents. It was equally obvious that, unless sound social programs could be developed, improvements in the district's physical plant would be almost meaningless. It was also apparent that the process of planning new or refurbished facilities must flow from, and not be imposed on the seven neighborhoods if the Program's physical and social goals were to be met.

The most striking case of the joining of these principals was registered by Bloomingdale in its Riverside Park Project, which is reported in detail in Part Three of this report. Another significant example was that of Chelsea's attempt to deal with the twin prob-

lems of severe housing blight and the lack of adequate playground facilities on one of its streets. Both came to focus in early 1961 after the murder of a five-year old girl in a dilapidated rooming house. Subsequently, a fire completely gutted a neighborhood rooming house and the Department of Buildings vacated two adjoining rear buildings, one of which was described by the building inspector as a cross between a stable and a sewer. Three other buildings in the immediate area showed similar evidences of deterioration. Efforts were made to bring them up to standard conditions but were unavailing. As a result, a fairly large segment of the block was in the process of complete deterioration, a condition which militated against improvements taking place elsewhere in the district. To compound the situation, the structures adjoined a public school desperately in need of refurbishing, and a playground. After consultation with residents and local community leaders, Chelsea proposed that the structure be acquired by the Board of Education, demolished and a playground created. Currently awaiting action by the Planning Commission, approval of the project will meet a variety of objectives important to district residents, and localized planning moved forward another step.⁴

In all of the foregoing situations, the Program consciously rejected grandiose plans involving major, capital expenditures for relatively simple improvement measures designed to resolve the minor irritants that became major neighborhood problems. As a result, there has been decided positive changes in the general physical environment of the neighborhoods and, since citizen involvement was an integral part of each action, a related improvement in the social climate of the districts.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Police officials believe that more powerful street lighting acts as a strong deterrent to criminal acts. In one district, however, staff reported that the new lights also made it easier for outdoor card players to gamble far into the night.

² The experience in all districts strongly suggests that tree planting and other aesthetic improvements are deemed to be of little consequence by neighborhood residents unless and until more fundamental housing and

social problems are remedied.

³ The Department of City Planning and the Program have been exploring the possibility of emulating neighborhood commons and similar vest pocket recreation projects which have been initiated in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. and Detroit.

⁴ Since some buildings will have to be demolished, pressures against the playground began to arise in the spring of 1964.

The second major objective of the NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAM was that of creating social conditions conducive to sound family life in viable communities. To realize this end, Conservation initiated a number of programs. On one level, it sought to improve the social climate of "grey" areas by reducing the incidence of crime, narcotics addiction, juvenile delinquency and intergroup tensions. On another, it attempted to meet the critical social needs of transitional neighborhoods by launching special projects in the fields of health, mental health, education, welfare, employment, consumer education and recreation. On still another, it started programs of tenant education, assistance and organization to help recent immigrants and other residents to adjust more readily to a complex urban environment. Finally, Conservation, through community organization and related activities, tried to involve residents in all phases of the Program, looking forward especially to resident-direction of the districts after the formal effort had hopefully succeeded.



Improving the Social Environment

Chapter 8 **CREATING A MORE FAVORABLE SOCIAL CLIMATE**

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- ☐ *Attacking Juvenile "Delinquency"* ☐ *Improving Intergroup Relations*

Chapter 9 **MEETING SOCIAL WELFARE NEEDS**

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Chapter 10 **ASSISTING, EDUCATING AND ORGANIZING TENANTS**

- ☐ *Introduction* ☐ *Trial and Error* ☐ *The In-Building Program*

Chapter 11 **BUILDING THE NEIGHBORHOOD**

- ☐ *Introduction* ☐ *Directing the Program* ☐ *Volunteering for the Program*
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Chapter 8

CREATING A MORE FAVORABLE SOCIAL CLIMATE

Introduction

As previously indicated, Conservation neighborhoods were beset by a host of social problems when the project was initiated. Fairly significant increases in the rates of crime, narcotics addiction and juvenile delinquency had created an aura of fear in the communities and contributed in no small part to the exodus of middle-class families from the areas. Intergroup tensions were high, adding another element to the process of community demoralization. Though highly-correlated with the decline of the housing stock, social problems could not be solved simply or solely by improving the physical environment. Unless they were solved, however, physical upgrading efforts would not only be meaningless but the neighborhoods would in all likelihood continue their headlong rush into slums. Accordingly, the seven districts developed plans to meet security problems by utilizing available resources on a better basis and establishing a closer rapport between residents and those charged with promoting neighborhood well-being.

Reducing Crime

" . . . Complaints of violations of law or communications relating to conditions requiring corrective action will receive prompt and careful attention."

This directive from the Police Department to the commanding officers of precincts covering Conservation Districts was the first step in the Program's attempt to reduce neighborhood crime. Brought about after conversations with police officials, the directive generally leads to the first formal contacts between district staff and the officers and patrolmen of precincts servicing the areas. At these and subsequent meetings, staff brought to the attention of the police problems of a criminal nature which were evident in pilot buildings and blocks. The precincts promised cooperation. In most districts, this usually took the form of augment-

ing squad car patrols; declaring pilot blocks and other streets as special beats to which foot patrolmen were assigned on a continuing basis; increasing coverage at nights, on weekends, in adjacent parks and in warm weather months; providing staff with information about police problems and conditions in the districts; and launching investigations of situations of concern to staff residents. To regularize the relationship, representatives of the precinct attended the monthly inter-agency meetings and met with district personnel at periodic intervals to discuss and act on local police matters.

Most important of all, the liaison arrangement that was established allowed neighborhood residents to avail themselves of a routine and oftentimes effective mode of bringing problems to the attention of the police. By contacting staff, residents could make complaints without fear of reprisals from criminal elements in the neighborhood. Similarly, when effective action was taken, confidence in the police was reinforced, a fact which enabled residents to once again bring problems directly to the attention of local authorities. In any event, action on the complaints was followed closely by staff and relayed to the community or, in cases of continuing problems, to the commanding officers of the precincts or specialized units of the department. Central staff reported problems and indicated progress at the highest echelon of the department.

At first, progress was slow. After some months in one district, the director reported the following situations on the pilot block during a holiday weekend:

"Drinking and card playing on stoop . . . Husband and wife in altercations, two patrolmen would not intervene in domestic quarrel . . . bongo-playing, singing, shouting in rooming house until 3:00 a.m. . . . street brawl broken up by police, arrests made . . . noticed group of derelicts concentrating in abandoned building, police informed and house put under surveillance . . ."

Footnotes for this chapter are on page 145.



Less than a month later, it was noted that the situation had improved considerably. A new captain, who apparently had a deeper understanding of the significance of the Program, launched a methodical attack on criminal activities in the neighborhood. Police under his command or other divisions effectively ended prostitution, significantly reduced gambling and the narcotics traffic and lowered the incidence of loitering, brawling and related forms of anti-social behavior. In another district, the pilot block dropped from number two to number thirty-eight in terms of the incidence of crime in the precinct. In another area, the number of felonies was stabilized and then gradually lowered. In still another community, a flourishing numbers operation was ended as the result of information supplied by staff, which was also the case in cutting down vagrancy in a small park.¹

Fairly severe police problems remain. The recent shooting by the police of two Puerto Ricans under somewhat clouded circumstances seriously hurt police-community relations in two districts, though leading to an intensive educational campaign in which the Program is taking an active part. In other districts, there

appears to be a continuation of a pattern of extensive gambling, especially in terms of the numbers racket. "Bootlegging," appears to have become a major industry in some of the areas, as is trade in airplane glue for addictive purposes. In portions of the district not fully serviced by the Program, the breakdown in law and order has not been substantially corrected. In almost all, residents have just taken the first steps toward raising their standards as these relate to police problems and action; until they are developed to a point where even minor manifestations of wrong-doings are not tolerated, fairly significant problems of a criminal nature will remain.

The Police Department itself has been faced with a number of serious problems. The precincts cover areas larger than the districts, including extremely deprived neighborhoods. The energy and resources of the department must of necessity be devoted to improving security in these adjacent, usually crime-ridden blocks. As a consequence, the precincts have not been able to provide the coverage that is needed or desired in Conservation areas. Lack of personnel—one precinct was 30 percent under strength during one period—

has been a problem, as was the periodic need to detach police from Conservation areas during special events, such as the 1960 session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Similarly, personnel turnover—one district had five captains in less than two years—has impeded a continuing commitment to the Program on the part of the men and officers of the precincts. Jurisdictional conflicts—three of the districts receive coverage from two precincts—have caused delays in the coordination and improvement of services. In some cases, patrolmen assigned to special beats have tended to treat their work in a cavalier fashion and, at times, appear to be more conspicuous by their absence than their presence. The Civil Rights movement and associated civil liberties questions have also posed a number of problems to residents and police officials.

Withal, a new mood seems to be developing in the neighborhoods. As is also being demonstrated in an experimental police-community relations program on the Lower East Side, the establishment of strong and regular communications between residents and the police is advantageous to everyone but the criminal. The prognosis for the districts in terms of a continuing reduction in the level of crime is, therefore, excellent.

Meeting The Narcotics Problem

Approximately eighteen months after one of the districts was in operation, a narcotics squad sergeant reported to the district director that the “word among the pushers is to go south of —th Street (i.e., out of the district) since you can’t make a sell anymore.” The officer himself stated that, “while the narcotics traffic was not completely dead, the situation had improved considerably over the past twelve months and should be even better in the near future.” Staff agreed.

While there was no exact data on the extent of narcotics addiction in the seven districts at the start of the Program, community leaders, residents, and narcotics authorities were agreed that the problem was serious, had grown significantly since the end of the Korean War and was a major factor contributing to the decline of some of the neighborhoods. Especially prevalent among single men and women in their twenties and thirties, addiction was usually centered in some of the area’s third and fourth rate hotels and rooming houses. A manifestation of serious social, psychological



Neighborhood Rehabilitation Center operated by the Health Department



provided a variety of after-care services for over 1000 addicts

and physical disorders, addiction appeared to be the cause of a number of neighborhood robberies and burglaries as addicts sought funds to purchase drugs. In one district, "pushers" were almost openly soliciting business near a high school; in almost all, residents reported that addicts could be seen taking "fixes" on roofs or in hallways of buildings.

To cope with the problem, Conservation staff established specific liaison lines with City and Federal narcotics authorities. Through this arrangement, district residents were provided with a confidential medium of communication through which information about the narcotics traffic could be exchanged without jeopardizing the safety of the informant, an again prime deterrent to citizen action prior to the start of the Program. As a result of the exchange, centers of addiction were identified, placed under surveillance and, where the evidence warranted, "undercover buys" were made by narcotics agents, with arrests following. During one period in one district, 25 arrests took place, 15 in buildings pinpointed by the liaison procedure. Sensing that the campaign was continuous and systematic, suppliers moved elsewhere, as did some addicts. Except for one, the problem is no longer significant in the older districts and seems to be improving in the newer neighborhoods.

Moving the narcotics problem elsewhere, while satisfactory to most neighborhood residents, was certainly no solution. To provide one, and at the request of the Conservation Program, the Department of Health allocated \$60,000 to establish a narcotics rehabilitation clinic in an area that services two of the Conservation Districts, as well as residents of adjoining neighborhoods. Medical, psychological, psychiatric, counseling, recreational, vocational and public health nursing services are available to addicts following hospitalization and detoxification. Using casework and group work techniques, the Center is giving special attention to preventing the recurrence of addiction among the 1,000 addicts it is equipped to handle. Staff of the neighborhood-rooted facility are also working with personnel of cooperating public and private agencies to give them a better understanding of the problem and suggest procedure which will allow them to more readily identify and then work with the addict and his family. A forward step, the rehabilitation clinic should do much to point the way to the amelioration of the narcotics

problem on the neighborhood level, though staff shortages have seriously impaired the initial work of the unit.

Attacking Juvenile "Delinquency"

During 1958, according to the Juvenile Aid Bureau of the Police Department, 42.9 of every 1,000 New York youths committed criminal offenses. In Bloomingdale and Hudson—the only Conservation Districts for which comparable data is available—the rates were, respectively, 32.5 and 18.9.² The data suggests what is probably true for six of the districts: Juvenile delinquency is a relatively minor problem in comparison to some areas of New York City though it appears to be increasing in some districts. Whatever the rate or trend, some residents perceived it to be a significant problem, to which staff and public and private agencies ought to address themselves.

Since other areas of the City were plagued with more acute delinquency problems, including the presence of formal fighting gangs, the services of the New York City Youth Board were not generally available to the Conservation Program, except to the extent that its work in peripheral areas had an effect on the districts.³ As a consequence, the districts had to evolve programs of their own. In Carnegie Hill, for instance, staff began to work with a group of youngsters who, as previously mentioned were causing no little damage to the well-being of the neighborhood. With the first contacts, it was evident that the adverse behavior of the youngsters was largely the result of the fact that they were without purposeful activities, a fact which neighborhood residents seemed to ignore in evaluating their behavior. Newcomers, the teenagers appeared to be unaware of the recreational facilities which were available in Central Park, less than two blocks away; instead, they played stickball on the streets and lived their social lives in basements and on roofs.

Through donations of money and equipment from area residents and the New York Yankees, the youngsters were formed into the Carnegie Hill Seniors and Juniors in the summer of 1961. Under the supervision of an adult volunteer, they began to play ball in the park. With inclement weather, they were introduced to available recreational and community facilities in an adjoining public housing project, previously not part

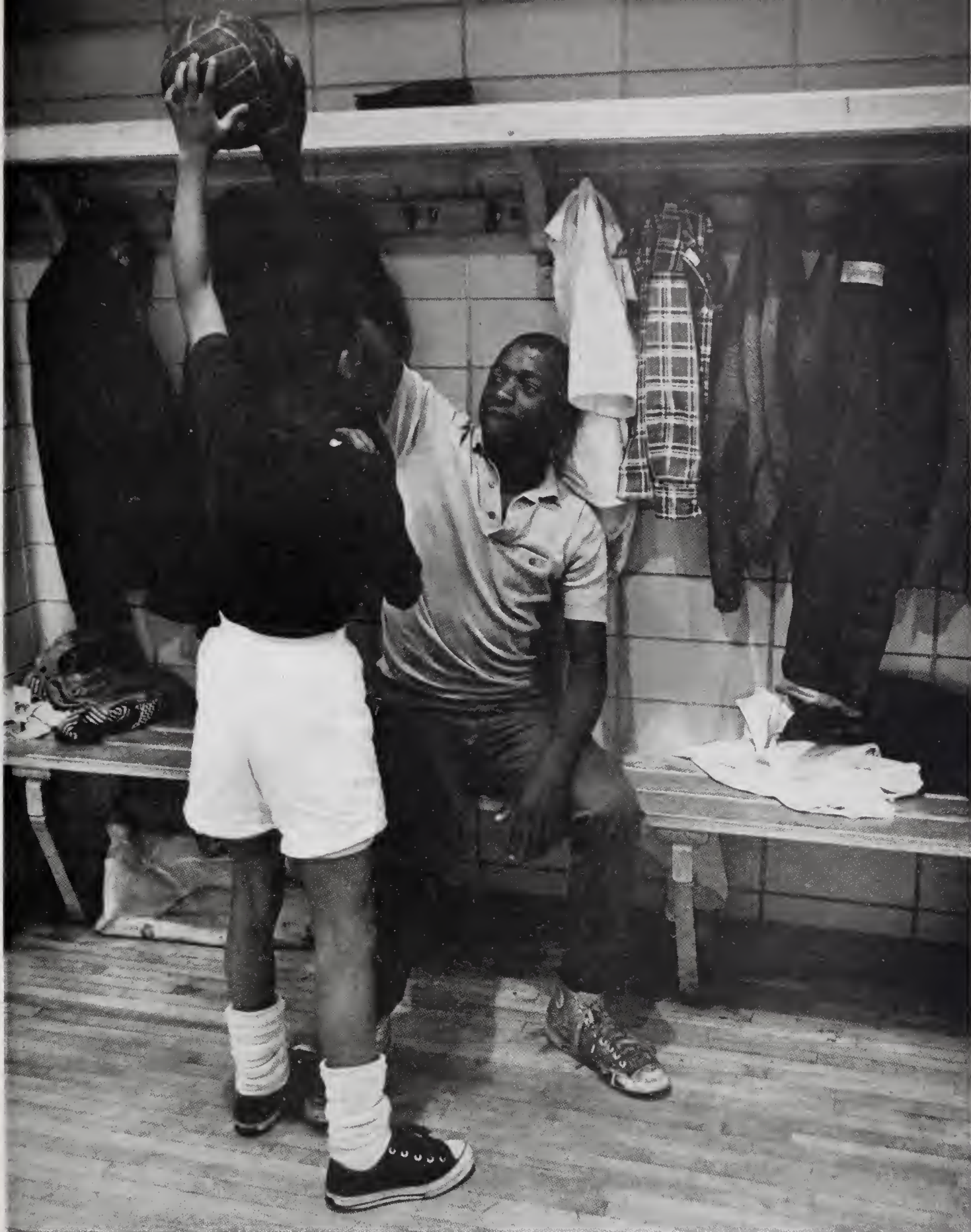
of the "turf" of Carnegie Hill youth. Subsequently, teenagers in the area began to participate in the East Harlem Olympics, softball and basketball leagues and in social and cultural programs operated by local community centers.⁴

As is indicated in other sections of this report, Bloomingdale and Morningside in particular have directed much of their attention towards providing constructive alternatives for the energy of their youths. In Chelsea, a particularly good referral relationship was established between local staff and authorities concerned with youth problems. In contrast to Mobilization for Youth on the Lower East Side or HARYOU in Central Harlem, the districts have not had either the framework or the resources to provide youths with the motivation and opportunities that are thought to preclude delinquent behavior. Nonetheless, the never serious delinquency problem has eased and should continue to improve.

Improving Intergroup Relations

Subconsciously or not, "grey" areas was more than a shorthand description of physical decline to many long-time Conservation District residents. It was almost equally an invidious appellation for the population changes that had occurred in five of the neighborhoods: They had been "white," they might become "black," they were in any event "grey" i.e., racially mixed. To some, perhaps even a majority of white residents, the change was not welcomed, should not be countenanced and ought in any event to be reversed. Failing this, the suburbs and other boroughs offered a convenient, if economically and psychologically expensive escape.

Underlying this attitude were a number of facts, and in terms of the liberal image of New York City, an extraordinarily high amount of racial, ethnic and class prejudice. Objectively, Chelsea, Bloomingdale, East Harlem, Carnegie Hill and Hudson had been almost totally white, middle-class neighborhoods until the early fifties. By 1960 non-whites, mainly Negroes, constituted 22 percent of the population of Bloomingdale, 11 percent of Carnegie Hill, 7 percent of Hudson and 3 percent, each, of East Harlem and Chelsea. Especially in Chelsea, East Harlem and Carnegie Hill, there had also been an undetermined though equally signi-



Recreation programs were started in Carnegie Hill as a means of providing purposeful activity for District youth

ificant increase in the number of Puerto Rican residents.⁵ In both cases the newcomers were of a generally lower socio-economic, cultural and educational level than the districts' white population. Superficially, the arrival of Negroes and Puerto Ricans in relatively large numbers coincided with the increasing deterioration of the housing stock and the general physical environment of the neighborhoods. On impression, the newcomers contributed in disproportionate numbers to the increasing crime, delinquency and narcotics rates. Not acculturated to a northern, urban environment, their sanitation practices, language, manner of dress, child rearing and other life patterns were almost completely alien to those of the majority of the white, middle-class residents.

Subjectively, some area residents blamed Negroes and Puerto Ricans—as Negroes and Puerto Ricans—for the decline in their neighborhoods. In such cases, they overlooked facts of age, poor maintenance, overcrowding and economic exploitation in assessing the decline of the housing stock. Similarly, they oftentimes attributed anti-social or criminal acts to minority groups, not individuals. They also conveniently forgot that they had actively or tacitly rejected middle-class Negroes and Puerto Ricans from their buildings and communities; individuals and families who would have been assets to the neighborhoods but instead were forced to live in segregated housing elsewhere in the City. Ironically enough, the construction of middle-class housing for minority group members resulted in the displacement of thousands of low-income Negroes and Puerto Ricans, many of whom settled in newly-created rooming houses and single-room occupancy accommodations in the City's "grey" areas. This was especially true on the West Side of Manhattan following the construction of two Title I projects in the heart of Harlem. As a consequence, the non-assimilated were "integrated" and the assimilated "segregated" through the operation of New York City's former and now discredited approach to slum clearance.

On the other side of the picture, the newcomers found themselves in a sea of hostility, suspicion and indifference. In the words of one, "the older residents just don't care." Paying exorbitant rentals for unspeakable housing conditions, they received little help in solving problems which they faced in their new environments. Many were unaware of community facili-



ties and resources which, if properly used, could have made life passable and even pleasant for the entire neighborhood. Quite naturally, they did not become involved in various aspects of neighborhood life. Many were completely apathetic; others began to engage in anti-social acts, oftentimes as a form of protest against the treatment which they were accorded. Without leadership, Negroes and Puerto Ricans also turned their wrath against each other. In Carnegie Hill, a Negro woman suggested that: "These Puerto Ricans come here and just don't know how to live civilized." Her Puerto Rican counterpart commented that "colored people make a lot of noise at night and throw garbage on the street."⁶ In Bloomingdale, street fights developed between the two groups.



Youth Board and Neighborhood Conservation personnel meet to plan new services for the district

It was not surprising then that, at the start of the Program, in the five heterogeneous neighborhoods, intergroup relations were critical. Tensions were high, oftentimes manifesting themselves in near-hysterical actions on the part of long-time residents.⁷ As previously indicated, the situation was particularly perilous in Chelsea. There, as elsewhere, tensions abated as measures were taken to increase neighborhood security and involve minority group members in the Program and neighborhood activities.

As the districts evolved, a new source of internecine friction appeared. It developed from the fact that overcrowding was confined almost exclusively to rooming houses, single room occupancy buildings and second and third rate hotels. Because of economic ex-

ploitation and racial discrimination, units in these buildings were occupied to a large extent by minority group families. Enforcing occupancy standards necessarily involved the relocation of a relatively large number of Negroes and Puerto Ricans. Private rehabilitation efforts, over which the City had no real control, also entailed a disproportionate displacement of non-white or Spanish-speaking residents.

A fairly small proportion of the minority group members, and a number of local housing, political and some civil rights groups charged that the Program's relocation efforts were nothing more or less than an attempt at minority group clearance. They backed up the charge by pointing to the continuing pattern of racial discrimination in existing middle-class

housing accommodations and the inability of low-income, minority group relocatees to gain accommodations in newly-converted buildings. They suggested that the decongestion process was not only discriminatory but the underlying reason for the Program.

Intertwined with opposition to other forms of urban renewal, the attack on the Program reached fairly sizeable proportions. A Spanish language newspaper, ran a series of critical articles on the Program, one of which was entitled: "The Scandal In The Bloomingdale Area: They Intend To Expel Puerto Ricans." This series followed closely on the heels of meetings of the Bloomingdale Conservation Association in which similar charges had been made about Negro displacement. In Chelsea, a group of Puerto Rican residents heartily endorsed the observation of a speaker that the community was not ready for integration, and would become so only after the Puerto Rican Community was so strongly organized that its rights and wishes were respected. As another group put it:

*"They are moved from integrated neighborhoods, such as Chelsea to segregated ghetto areas in Bedford-Stuyvesant or the South Bronx. Neighborhood Conservation has had the discriminatory effect of removing Negro and Puerto Rican families, placing the hardship of relocation on them, and making the Neighborhood Conservation area more 'white.' 'Upgrading' a neighborhood is a polite way of saying that poor people, especially Negroes and Puerto Ricans, have moved out, and higher-income whites have moved in."*³

The task of alleviating intergroup tensions and creating "open" neighborhoods has been difficult. The Program was aware that code enforcement in some areas would involve the disproportionate displacement of minority group families. It pursued this policy because, as previously stated, it was unconscionable as well as illegal to allow entire families to live in single rooms. The districts have been scrupulously correct in relocating overcrowded families irrespective of their racial or national backgrounds. In two of the five mixed neighborhoods, Carnegie Hill and East Harlem, for instance, only a few families, some of whom were white, had to be relocated since the vast majority were in legal occupancy. Through the activities of the Department of Real Estate, the Housing Authority and the Commission on Human Rights, an effort, albeit not always successful, has been made to insure that

the relocatees found new housing without regard to their race, creed or color. Some have found standard apartments in other integrated neighborhoods. Where, as in Bloomingdale, relocation entailed the significant displacement of Negroes and Puerto Ricans, the district has successfully fought against the recreation of an all-white enclave by obtaining new low-income racially integrated housing.

Of significance, too, is the fact that the Conservation Program has recreated housing and social conditions which have allowed middle-class white residents to remain in, or be attracted back to urban neighborhoods. One product of this has been that white parents are returning their children to the public schools in increasing numbers, a trend which has helped to obviate against the creation of *de facto* segregated schools and community facilities.⁴ It may even be that, in the absence of the Program, areas such as Chelsea and Bloomingdale would now be almost completely segregated, as indeed they were in terms of individual buildings and blocks at the start of the venture.

Of equal importance have been efforts to involve minority group members in all aspects of the Conservation Program and neighborhood activities. Negroes and Puerto Ricans serve on the steering committees of all but one district which have this governing management thereby sharing in the direction of the projects. Building, block and community organizations are generally representative of various population groupings, a special effort in this direction having been made in Chelsea in recent months. Similarly, special projects, such as the Bloomingdale Parks and Family programs, are fairly well integrated. Indeed, one of the overriding reasons for initiating such ventures was that of involving whites and non-whites in projects of mutual benefit and overall community significance. Finally, the tenant aid, education and organization programs have been designated in large measure to allow newcomers to New York City to adjust to their new surroundings in a better manner. This has been of special benefit to minority group members in allowing them to help themselves to overcome difficult problems in urban living and start the process of cultural, economic, social and political integration.

On balance, these programs have served to reduce tensions and create a more democratic climate in the neighborhoods. Significant problems remain. Except for

a few buildings in Hudson, there has been no appreciable dent in the pattern of discrimination in existing middle-class housing. Except for isolated cases in Bloomingdale and Chelsea, this also holds true for accommodations in newly-rehabilitated private dwellings. Involvement of minority group members at varying levels of the formal and informal organizational structures of the neighborhoods is not as high as could be expected and certainly not as high as is desired. Significantly, these situations may arise from the fact that the Program has been unable so far to involve public and private intergroup agencies in a concerted, coordinated and continuing attack on intergroup problems in the districts.¹⁰ Nonetheless, tensions have abated

and the potential is being created for a significant breakthrough in this area of the Program's responsibility.

Interacting with improvements in the physical environment, the reduction of crime, addiction, delinquency and intergroup tensions has created a more favorable social climate in most, though not all of the districts. Perhaps more important has been the establishment of regular and fairly strong lines of communication between authorities and residents and among neighbors of varying backgrounds. Because of this, the districts now have the opportunity to take the additional steps that should lead to significant improvements in this aspect of neighborhood life.

FOOTNOTES

¹ In one district during the first half of 1963, 428 arrests were made, 316 for disorderly conduct and only 25 for felonies. The district reported that the period was "one of the quietest in the memory of long time residents."

² The data is collected for Health Areas; Bloomingdale and Hudson are the only districts whose boundaries coincide with those of the Health Areas.

³ The most prominent example of this has been on the West Side of Manhattan where the Youth Board has allocated \$175,000 for fiscal 1962-1963 to undertake group work, case work and recreational services for youth of this area. While the services are concentrated in neighborhoods to the east of Hudson and Bloomingdale, both are enjoying the benefits through the direct participation of some of their youth in these programs and the prevention of the spillage of delinquency problems into the neighborhood from surrounding communities.

⁴ A group of youths in one area did become involved in gang warfare and is now being serviced by street club workers of the Youth Board. In another district, the problems presented by ethnically distinct teenage gangs have been handled through formal social work techniques.

⁵ The data is misleading since it is a determination of the percentage of non-white occupied dwelling units, by city block, in Conservation Districts. Given the relatively large size of non-white households, their proportion to the total population is probably much higher. While there is no exact data available on the Puerto Rican population of these areas, it is interesting to note that a sample survey in Chelsea indicated that half of the respondents were of Puerto Rican origin. For all districts, Puerto Ricans constituted 18 percent of the population as of April, 1960.

⁶ Mat L. Wohl, *THE CARNEGIE HILL AREA: A PROFILE*, unpublished re-

port submitted in connection with fulfillment of the requirements for course 209.6 of New York University in cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights.

⁷ At the start of the Bloomingdale effort, it seemed that many of the elderly white residents complained whenever two or more Negroes or Puerto Ricans came together and began to converse on the sidewalks or stoops of the area. The same sort of reactions were sometimes in evidence among middle-class Negroes in Hamilton-Grange and Morningside, suggesting the class basis of racial and ethnic prejudice.

⁸ It was interesting to note that some of the groups making assertions of this nature were led by middle-class whites, who could only be described as having a cynical stake in opposing relocation since the out-migration of minority group members, for whom they purported to speak, diminished their power base and political effectiveness. They usually condemned the Program for all of society's racial ills and offered no concrete alternative to overcrowding, unless the advocacy of a complete cessation of the Program could be credited in this manner.

⁹ One school in Bloomingdale, which had a white enrollment of 6 percent in the winter of 1960, now has a similar enrollment of 21 percent. In Chelsea, a school reports the same population balance in 1964 as in 1960, thereby countering the borough-wide trend towards racial exclusiveness in public schools.

¹⁰ Bloomingdale took a preliminary step in this direction in the summer of 1961, when it called in a score of intergroup agencies to discuss relevant problems. The failure of some of these agencies to appear dampened the enthusiasm for a comprehensive effort in this field at that time. On the other hand, the New York City Commission on Human Rights has played an important role in reducing tensions and developing indigenous minority leadership in neighborhoods receiving Area Services treatment. This has been particularly true of Arverne and Coney Island, and through special employment and consumer education projects, Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Chapter 9

MEETING SOCIAL WELFARE NEEDS

Introduction

An integral part of the Neighborhood Conservation Program was the effort to enrich the seven "grey" areas by providing improved or new social services and related facilities. This task, one involving activities in the fields of health, mental health, education, welfare, employment, consumer education and recreation, was particularly important in middle-class neighborhoods undergoing far reaching changes. In such communities, social services were usually not present, lagged behind neighborhood needs or had to be recased to meet newly-emerging problems. Meeting these demands also provided the Program with the challenge of meshing housing and social action programs; coordinating the work of private and public agencies; and allowing the districts to serve as action laboratories in which some new approaches to social welfare problems were devised and tested.

Towards Better Health Services

In SEARCHLIGHT ON NEW YORK, the Community Service Society suggested that, during any given eight-week period, three million New Yorkers had a medical problem, of whom less than two million sought medical advice. In their words:

*"In spite of the dramatic advances that medical science has achieved, ill health continues to be the most omnipresent problem with which our society is afflicted. We have made tremendous progress in our ability to patch up the human machine, but our ability to anticipate and prevent illness is far less effective. The number of days of incapacity due to illness suffered by New York residents each year is astronomical, and the impact of physical disability on the individual and on family life is far-reaching and destructive. Poor health not only impairs the individual's capacity to earn a living, but puts an intolerable strain on family relations and a heavy financial burden on the community."*¹

The Society might well have added that achieving sound neighborhood life is virtually impossible if a sizeable proportion of the residents have significant health problems and fail to use available health services. It is in this connection that East Harlem, Bloomingdale and Hudson mounted drives against ill-health, each in its own way in keeping with its particular needs, resources and objectives.

Chelsea faced a paradox. Various surveys indicated what appeared to be an inordinate amount of ill-health among the population sampled, especially older residents and members of economically marginal families. On the other hand, the district was blessed with a variety of excellent health services: The Lower West Side Health Center of the Department of Health provided free chest, dental, eye and social hygiene clinical services, as well as child health station, school health and cancer detection facilities. Other health services were available, yet few of the neighborhood's residents seemed to be taking advantage of them even though the facility was located only a few blocks from the conservation district.

Health officials believed that the paradox could be resolved through a campaign designed to apprise residents of available services and facilities. Chelsea joined in the sponsorship of the project, which was launched in January, 1960. As a first step, district residents were given top priority by health personnel in school and field visits. Similarly, public health nurses were asked to assess the health needs of the entire family and, where indicated, make definite referrals and appointments for remedial treatment. They were also asked to make periodic follow-ups to help insure that the referrals were being honored. A health educator was assigned to work with tenant groups to explain the program and the services that were available. Some of these meetings were held in the site office and were addressed by a Department of Health nutritionist and a Department of Welfare home econo-

Footnotes for this chapter are on page 164.



Improving health services was an integral part of the program in Chelsea

mist, who organized discussions and demonstrations in nutrition and homemaking as an integral part of this approach to neighborhood health problems.

Health Department personnel also established a special file in which pertinent health information for each Conservation family was consolidated and made available for review, follow-up and evaluation. Special projects were started. These included blood and diabetes detection tests and mobile chest X-ray and polio inoculation programs. Each was repeated periodically in order to insure maximum and continuing coverage; each received wide publicity.²

Services were provided at the health center, public schools, Conservation office, in homes and through the mobile units. During a twelve-month period, 608 polio shots, 514 chest X-rays and 267 blood tests were ad-

ministered in the Conservation area. A number of significant health problems were discovered. To correct them, public health nurses made 223 home visits to insure that appointments were being kept. School children were treated in various clinics; immunized against smallpox, diphtheria and tetanus; given physical examinations and, where warranted, referred for more specialized medical treatment. Summing up the program, the district health officer stated:

" . . . that the residents of the Chelsea Conservation District . . . have received and continue to receive health services exceeding in quantity those normally allotted to an area of comparable size; this is due to the concentration of personnel . . . the top priority given to the project, and the devotion of staff members . . . "

To insure that the initial high level of service was

maintained, the center and district recently embarked on a health survey designed to reach into every home in the district; elicit information about health problems and knowledge of health facilities; and help underscore the need for residents to take advantage of existing services. This program should do much to improve the health of area residents; describe the health services which are needed in similar neighborhoods; and help make the Conservation District a socially, psychologically and physically healthier community.

Interviews with East Harlem pilot block residents suggested the presence of a number of health problems associated with longevity. Calling the problems to the attention of local health officials at individual and inter-agency meetings, district staff suggested the desirability of initiating comprehensive geriatric services for elderly residents of the area. Fortunately, the Department of Health was about to start pilot geriatric studies and agreed to launch a demonstration study of the health status and needs of the more than 100 persons over 60 years of age who lived on the pilot block.

The ensuing diagnostic and referral project was slow in developing, mainly because residents failed to respond to invitations asking them to come to the East Harlem Center for examinations and discussions of their health problems. Even with personal interviews, only one-third of the group participated. While discouraging, the response confirmed the Chelsea experience of under-utilization of community health services and suggested the presence of a number of inhibiting cultural, socio-economic and generational factors. Medical personnel believed that the pattern of under-utilization could be explained on the basis of the background of the respondents and the changing face of East Harlem:

"Most of the elderly in this study were of Italian national origin, who had lived in this community most of their lives and had not participated in any of the present community activities. They seemed quite resistant to any ideas involving change or exposure to other ethnic groups. As a result, they have shut themselves off from many community resources, primarily because of fear that they would lose their identity. The same resistance met by our interviewers has been experienced by community centers in the area."

Of great implication to the entire social side of the Conservation process, this finding was matched by the

outcome of the diagnostic service itself. Of the thirty-one individuals examined, only three were found to be free of disease. Nineteen untreated health conditions were found, fourteen of which had been previously undiagnosed. All five of the elderly residents who were not receiving medical treatment from either public or private sources were found to have a major medical problem.³

In discussions, respondents expressed the belief that they received adequate medical care for particular diseases but encountered difficulties in obtaining referrals for other and additional complaints. The speed in which they were processed through clinics was commented on adversely, as was the difficulty of having acute health problems handled on the same day at the same clinic. Many of those attending private physicians reported financial difficulties in purchasing drugs or were extremely appreciative of the fact that their doctors were treating them at reduced rates.

Participating staff drew three major conclusions from this small, and admittedly unrepresentative sample:

- People interviewed seek and obtain medical care when they have diseases of which they are aware. Greater education is required to make them aware of the need for routine, preventive check-ups. In addition, more diagnostic facilities are important for this age group.
- For many of the persons interviewed, this was their first experience in the community health center although they all know of its existence and of the services it offered. Most of them had not utilized these services because of fears of public agencies. This also suggests the need for greater education to break down irrational fears.
- As a result of this study and the diagnostic examinations performed, 16 of the 31 candidates examined derived benefit through specific referral to treatment agencies and to other agencies involved in their care. This made for better understanding of the patient's medical problems and filled in the gaps in medical care which had been overlooked. There is a suggestion here of a need for some coordinating service for the elderly where their problems as a whole can be discussed, diagnosed, and channeled to the various agencies involved.

Like other special Conservation projects, the East Harlem health demonstration has been of benefit to other

New Yorkers, since the findings and recommendations were used to establish new health services for elderly residents in a number of public housing developments. Further, and through the interchange of ideas and techniques between districts, the health program developed in East Harlem may be given even wider currency as it is adapted and applied in other neighborhoods serviced by the Program.⁴

In keeping with the Program's diversity, Bloomingdale took still another approach to health problems and services. Early in 1960, staff met with representatives of the Department of Health and the Department of Welfare to formulate plans for intensifying the area's health education and health service programs. Forming a coordinating committee, the agencies conducted pre-test interviews with families in three target buildings in order to ascertain the probable health needs of residents and establish priorities for services. On the basis of the pilot study, it was determined that the incidence of ill health in the district was more extensive than expected; more intensive health counseling and education were indicated; and personal contacts with families was necessitated because of prevailing mistrust about public health services and the wide spread lack of knowledge about existing health facilities. Unfortunately, specialized manpower was not available to undertake a program on the scale suggested by the analysis.

At approximately the same time, the Director of the Graduate Public Health Nursing Program of New York University approached district staff to inquire about the possibility of using Bloomingdale as a field laboratory for students seeking advanced degrees in public health nursing. Dovetailing exactly with Bloomingdale's needs, the offer was accepted by the coordinating committee. Subsequently, a plan was formulated which allowed the students—all of whom were registered nurses with two to five years of public health nursing experience—to render intensive services to Bloomingdale residents.

After administrative problems were resolved, supervision established, and services coordinated so as to avoid duplication, the students began the task of assessing the health status of residents of two buildings undergoing inspectional and other Conservation treatment. Using structured schedules, the nurses interviewed 45 families between May and June, 1960. In

the course of the project, they made 627 home visits to collect information on the health status of each family; advised them on needed treatment and general health matters, such as diet and sanitary practices; referred those in need to appropriate clinics and hospitals; arranged for home nursing for the aged or bedridden; revisited to see that various recommendations were being carried out; and reported deleterious housing or social conditions to Bloomingdale staff for appropriate action.

Following summer vacation, a new group of public health nurses resumed activities in Bloomingdale. Besides continuing to work in the two buildings covered during the late spring, the nurses began to give service in three more structures, all of which were being covered by the housing inspectional departments. At the same time, tenants in the dwellings were being organized, assisted, and receiving education in better house-keeping and sanitation practices through Bloomingdale's "in-building" program. One consequence of this total approach to housing, social and health problems was that of allowing staff to exchange pertinent information more quickly, efficiently and to take action to redress adverse situations. Thus, the nurses could report what appeared to be overcrowded housing conditions to the building inspector, who would launch an immediate investigation. In turn, the inspector could report to the nurses what seemed to him to be adverse health conditions, which they would investigate.

This pattern of exchange of information and direct service was repeated throughout the winter and spring of 1960-1961 as nurses from the seminar moved into new target buildings in the neighborhood. As in the earlier program, the same general types of health problems were found and ameliorative services rendered. One was that of overcrowding which led to the rapid transmission of communicable diseases and the development of emotional problems deriving from a lack of privacy. It was also discovered that many of the infants and pre-school children had not received medical services since birth except in acute emergencies. In the words of the nurses: "Many parents did not seem to realize the importance of early immunization as a means of disease prevention . . ." Of importance, too, as a health problem was the pattern of inadequate nutrition and poor dietary measures. High carbohydrate and low mineral and protein diets ap-

peared to be the rule rather than the exception and could be attributed not only to the marginal economic position of the families but to poor shopping and budgetary practices and lack of knowledge about basic food values. Also of concern were poor sanitation habits and the significant incidence of specific medical problems such as mental retardation, cardiac disease, tuberculosis, orthopedic disabilities and psychiatric disorders.

In evaluating the problems, the nurses drew a number of conclusions:

"Information secured during home visits revealed that approximately 55 percent of the patients with readily identifiable health problems were not receiving medical treatment nor were they under the care of community health agencies. In some instances, patients indicated prior contact with available community health facilities; however, they were delinquent in keeping appointments. Of this group, many made use of the local hospitals on an emergency basis but appeared unaware of the importance of continued health supervision once the immediate crisis had been resolved. In other instances, patients seemed to be unaware of services available to deal with less acute health problems."

"Referrals to community agencies were based on the public health nursing students' estimation of patients' needs. In an attempt to improve patients' understanding of their own health needs and to foster self-direction in meeting these needs, the public health nursing students discussed the importance of health supervision, described the health services available and explained the procedure to be followed in securing appointments. In only very few cases did the nurses make appointments for the patients. Of 171 suggested referrals, 101 or 58 percent were known to have been followed. Although this is not a singularly high rate of achievement, it is suggestive of good potential in health reeducation. It also points out a need to evaluate referrals in order to determine possible causative factors."

They also suggested that many health problems lent themselves to a program of long-range education "... which may involve numerous other disciplines of the health and welfare teams within the community."

Based on these insights, the public health nursing

students reactivated their program in the fall of 1961 and 1962 by again tackling health problems in target buildings. Because of population changes brought about by relocation activities, the nurses shifted their focus to the health problems of unrelated individuals rather than families. In this new phase, special attention was given on one block to 12 paraplegic cases and 40 other residents who were receiving aid-to-the-disabled funds from the Department of Welfare. Meshing their duties with special Department of Welfare and Bloomingdale programs, the nurses assisted in the physical rehabilitation process, as well as continuing the program of diagnosis, referral and health education. With reduced caseloads, members of the seminar also began working with Bloomingdale to develop a better understanding of, and approach to community health problems and services, an approach which had been limited to some extent by uncertainty in goals and the amount of time available for field work. The entire service was placed on a permanent basis in September, 1963, when the nurses transferred their activities to Grosvenor Neighborhood House, which will service the area after the formal "closing" of Bloomingdale.⁶

Mental Health: New Approaches

The districts have also been concerned with meeting mental health needs on a neighborhood basis. As with rates of juvenile delinquency, available data suggests that the incidence of mental illness had been rising in the seven Conservation districts but was not as high as in some other areas of Manhattan or New York City as a whole. Nonetheless, the problem was of great concern to neighborhood residents and co-operating public and private agencies.

Unlike physical health services, facilities for dealing with mental health problems were virtually nonexistent in the neighborhoods under review. Except for East Harlem, Morningside and Chelsea, where local settlement houses operate mental hygiene clinics, the districts did not usually have localized resources which could be utilized to deal with mental health problems. As a result, they had to refer individuals with psychological or psychiatric problems to appropriate, though overcrowded public and private clinics elsewhere in Manhattan. This, for instance, has been East Harlem's approach through its short-term case work referral

services and in Bloomingdale's public health nursing, in-building and special welfare task force projects. In addition, there was not at first a definitive attempt on the part of the districts to describe the incidence of emotional problems and help provide appropriate community mental health services.

The first exception was in Hudson. In four buildings on its pilot block, containing approximately 600 dwelling units, it was discovered that 85 individuals receiving public assistance had case histories indicating hospitalization in mental institutions. Many had been discharged from mental institutions in the recent past and were not receiving needed after-care services. The mental illnesses from which they were suffering often-times manifested themselves in narcotics addiction, alcoholism and other personal and social aberrations. They had congregated together as a result of friendships developed in the institutions or as a result of the referral policies of public agencies. Quite naturally, the concentration of the group in a few buildings on one block was causing a serious situation in the immediate area, concern throughout the neighborhood and, since remedial services were not being supplied, was having an adverse effect on their personal and social adjustment.

Hudson alerted public and private agencies to the situation: The Manhattan After-Care Division of the State Department of Mental Hygiene, the Department of Welfare, particularly its Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the West Side Narcotics Clinic of the Department of Health, and a private social agency engaged in psychiatric rehabilitation. Hudson also took the lead in identifying the caseload through interviews and by a systematic search of pertinent records. Following this action, consolidated caseloads were sought and the participating agencies were prevailed upon to provide intensive casework, group work and recreational services. Cooperating personnel conducted some of the services in space which was made available without charge by the block's property owners. As the program has evolved, services have been extended to other, similarly situated residents of Hudson and the adjacent Bloomingdale area.

As a result of the effort, adjustment has been improved. The content of patient contacts has varied significantly from previous clinical contacts, especially as anonymity has been dispelled, day-to-day living

problems perceived as major impediments to adjustment, and a previously hostile environment changed to one in which clients and supportive professionals can function more effectively. The concentration of cases has been reduced sharply with, of course, direct benefits to the residents of the entire Hudson area, though failure to consolidate case loads, lack of personnel, and the continuation by the agencies of a number of outmoded policies and procedures have impaired the effectiveness of the project.⁷

One of the major manifestations of mental and physical illness is that of alcoholic psychosis. Especially pronounced in single-room occupancy buildings in Hudson and Bloomingdale, the incidence of this and related disorders were such that some Conservation buildings and blocks were beginning to resemble vest-pocket "boweries." Characteristically, those affected were extremely isolated, uneducated, of a low socio-

Hudson staff member extends helping hand to a West Side derelict



economic class, and were usually unemployed or dependent on public assistance because of advanced age or as a result of their physical, psychological and social disabilities. Highly visible in predominantly middle-class neighborhoods, those in a pre-skid-row condition were particularly singled out for the ire of neighborhood residents when their drinking was done *al fresco* or accompanied by anti-social outbreaks.

To meet the problem, the Program suggested an alcoholic treatment program for the estimated 5,300 alcoholics living in Bloomingdale, Hudson and West Side Area Services Projects, North and South. Working in conjunction with a number of public and private agencies,⁸ the Program proposed a service which would be integrated with housing and social improvement activities; provide medical, psychiatric and social work services in a center that would be affiliated with a hospital in which beds and facilities were earmarked for in-patient treatment; and provide a mobile staff that would seek to meet immediate needs, develop motivation and provide follow-up services in single-room occupancy buildings, the population of which have alcoholic rates as high as fifty percent. The service would be aimed at the severely disabled members of the group, and geared at first around such seemingly simple, though really complex goals as helping alcoholics to get up and eat breakfast. If consummated, the project should do much to meet one of the really unfulfilled needs of the districts and demonstrate the soundness of neighborhood-based, health and related social welfare services.

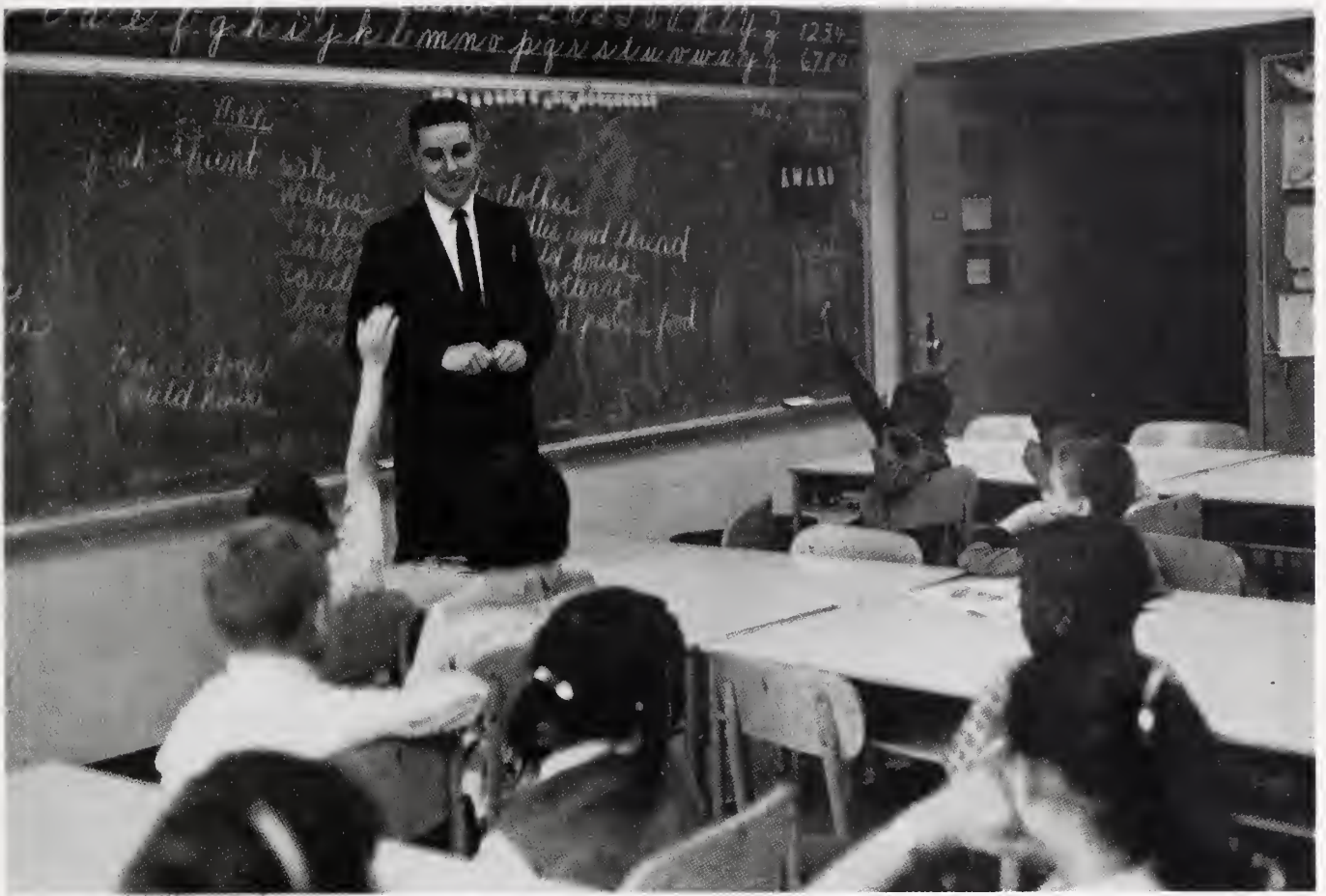
Overall, the Conservation approach to health problems is showing progress not only in describing what needs to be done but in meeting acute and chronic medical and psychiatric needs. It has, also, pointedly demonstrated the interrelation of housing, health and social problems and the need for an interdisciplinary approach. Most important of all, the programs have eased misery, set conditions for more stable family life and demonstrated that both public and private agencies can work together in an effective manner in achieving the goal of healthier neighborhoods. As in all Conservation projects, these have been empirical responses to problems perceived to be of major concern to the neighborhoods involved, structured and evaluated so as to be of potential benefit to New Yorkers residing outside of the seven "grey" neighborhoods.

Education: The Challenge

Wide discrepancies existed in facilities and services of public schools serving the districts. In terms of physical plant, they ranged from dilapidated structures, through old, though sound buildings, to modern educational edifices. Recreational facilities also showed wide variances: They were almost completely absent in one school in Chelsea and nearly ideal in a newly-built structure in Bloomingdale. Teacher shortages were pronounced in some schools, absent in others. Problems related to personnel turnover, lack of experienced teachers and the morale of faculty varied by districts and by schools within the districts. This was also true of the quality of instruction; the level of the curriculum; the degree of disciplinary problems; the presence of guidance services; and the dedication of teachers and administrative personnel. The schools contrasted, too, in terms of racial integration, the degree of utilization, the provision of specialized services, and in relations with parents and other neighborhood residents. From a broad perspective, they appeared to reflect the communities in which they were located: sound though troubled.

Some type of remedial action was indicated. What it was to be posed a problem. Because of the historical, legal and administrative separation of the Board of Education from other municipal agencies, it was both impossible and undesirable for the Program to "coordinate" the work of the public schools in the districts. Similarly, Conservation neither wanted nor could interfere in the content of the educational process. However, it was thought that it could begin to work with educators to solve problems of mutual concern; take actions which would have an indirect, though hopefully positive effect on the substance and procedures of the work of the schools; and relate the Program to the schools and the schools to the Program.

In meeting situations of mutual concern, action was taken over a fairly wide range of problems. Stemming from conversations with school officials at inter-agency meetings, a number of educational issues were posed and solutions proffered. As an example, Chelsea worked with parents, teachers and residents to speed the renovation of one of its schools, while also attempting to secure adequate recreational facilities. In East Harlem, staff supported efforts of the schools to



Information about public services in East Harlem is given to students in a "Conservation" class

resist a proposed reduction in guidance services and cooperated in an attempt to conduct a census of children with behavioral problems. Carnegie Hill, as still another example, was active in assisting its schools by sharing information about housing and social problems which effected the work of individual students.

Other programs have had an indirect effect either on the substance or procedures of education in the neighborhoods. Morningside, in conjunction with the Church of the Master, established a specialized remedial reading program during the summer of 1961. It worked closely with the local P.T.A. in the venture, helping to secure volunteer teachers for the project, one result of which was that the Board of Education's community-wide remedial reading program was initiated in both grade schools servicing the area.

Carnegie Hill and Hamilton-Grange, borrowing a concept first introduced in the West Side Area Services Project, South, started neighborhood study clubs for the youth of their districts. Providing a quiet setting in which to do homework, as well as tutorial help on an individual or group basis, the study clubs were administered by licensed teachers, who were assisted by college students and neighborhood volunteers. Encouraged to use reference books, encyclopedias and to go beyond the confines of the homework assignments, the students taking advantage of the facilities were also helped to raise their own self-images and to think in terms of realistic academic and vocational goals.

Drawing on resources made available by the Frederick W. Richmond Foundation, the Astor Foundation and the Heckscher Foundation, the study clubs were

particularly successful in raising the reading levels of deprived youth who attended the centers on a regular basis, and in attracting parents to a non-academic setting in which they felt at ease when discussing the educational problems and progress of their offspring. They also demonstrated the basis for mutual cooperation between private agencies, parents and the schools, some of whom have been included in the Board of Education's own after-school study program.⁹

Also of indirect benefit has been the Program's relocation efforts. As previously noted in the case of Chelsea, one side effect of relocation has been that of helping to decongest the schools, which was of benefit in allowing teachers to teach rather than just 'manage.' Decreasing population density had the added and important value of creating better racially, ethnically and economically integrated schools. In this last connection, Bloomingdale undertook a special campaign to convince middle-class parents to enroll their youngsters in the district's increasingly better public schools.

Linking Conservation to the schools and the schools to Conservation has received the special attention of East Harlem. There it became apparent quite early that physical and social upgrading efforts could be given a decided forward thrust if school children understood and identified with the Program. To achieve this, Community Service Society staff proposed to school officials that Conservation become an integral part of the social studies curriculum in one of the area's elementary and one of its junior high schools. In explaining the idea, East Harlem staff noted that the program was apt not only to encourage positive activities on the part of neighborhood children but help raise the standards and expectations of their parents.

Taking the lead in planning the Conservation curriculum, the principals of the two public schools introduced the subject to their classrooms in the fall of 1961. Briefly, the materials that were developed dealt with the objectives of the Program; the roles of various municipal departments in carrying out improvements; and the contributions which youngsters and their parents could make towards achieving various physical and social upgrading goals. Utilizing maps and other graphic materials, the students were introduced to neighborhood facilities and advised about the services of a variety of public and private agencies. Conservation courses were taught by teachers, district

staff, inspectors and other municipal personnel, both in classrooms and through field visits to the neighborhood. In Bloomingdale, a related program was tried in one school. There, children made Conservation posters, murals and dioramas; took field visits to rehabilitated buildings and the reclaimed Riverside Park; and prepared "plans" for the area.

These activities, as well as a special skit on Conservation in Bloomingdale, have helped to draw the schools much deeper into neighborhood life, with beneficial results to all concerned.¹⁰ While undoubtedly valuable, they have not met the fundamental challenge of creating excellence in education in Conservation Districts. The Program hopes to work closely in the future with the Board of Education in achieving this objective, which will entail an early and expanded program of capital expenditures and the inauguration of a wide range of educational programs.

Social Welfare in "Grey" Areas

The Community Service Society has described in detail various social welfare problems confronting New Yorkers. The report estimated that the City's health and welfare bill was approximately two billion dollars a year, or about three percent of all personal income. It pointed out that this expenditure was made to meet a variety of needs, among which were:

- The fact that approximately 140,000 New York families or 7 percent of the total, had incomes of less than \$2,000 a year, a sum which is considered inadequate to support even two-person households.
- Four percent of all families have more than seven members; 10 percent of the city's children do not live with their fathers or mothers.
- Three percent of the males and 5 percent of the females over 14 years of age are either divorced or separated.
- While 70,000 families are formed each year, nearly 50,000 reach a point of family breakdown serious enough to call for legal action. Over 135,000 families are presently affected by desertion or failure of the responsible party to properly support family members.
- An increasing number of women with young children are in the labor force; marriages in late adolescence are more and more common; 6.9 percent of all live births occur out of wedlock.¹¹

These and other social welfare problems were in evidence in Conservation Districts. While the problems were not as extensive as in really deprived areas of the City, they were of sufficient magnitude to cause

concern to area residents and public and private agencies. This was particularly true because the neighborhoods involved had been virtually free of such problems in the recent past, which is the context in which Table 16 should be read:

TABLE 16
DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES RECEIVING WELFARE ASSISTANCE
IN NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS¹²
September, 1961

District	Total Families	Total Families Receiving Welfare Assistance	Percentage Families Receiving Welfare
Totals for all Districts	27,249	2,706	10%
Bloomingdale	4,342	240	6%
Hudson	14,380	1,524	11%
Morningside	1,172	86	7%
Carnegie Hill	1,923	134	7%
Chelsea	2,331	207	9%
East Harlem	2,440	146	6%
Hamilton-Grange	601	72	12%

To help meet social welfare problems, the Conservation Program turned immediately to the Department of Welfare, asking it for the highest possible priorities in services for residents receiving public assistance. This involved, in the first instance, a census of welfare cases in the districts, and, where possible, the consolidation of caseloads to coincide with the boundaries of the districts. In East Harlem, consolidation meant that some of the district's cases were assigned to a special unit composed of three social investigators and a unit supervisor, rather than, as was the case in the past, being covered by from twelve to fifteen social investigators, most of whom were assigned to different case units. In districts with relatively small caseloads, or where consolidation was limited to pilot blocks, one or two social investigators

were assigned to cover the cases. The Program also asked that caseloads be reduced to help provide better services and allow social investigators to concentrate on rehabilitative tasks rather than simply administering financial aid. Unfortunately, this objective was never achieved in a completely satisfactory manner.¹³

At the time of consolidation, local Welfare Department staff became involved in the Conservation process. In Chelsea, as an example, the administrator, assistant administrator, unit supervisor and social investigators of the American Welfare Center began to participate in monthly interdepartmental meetings, sharing with their staff and governmental colleagues problems, plans and programs related to social welfare in the district. Social investigators were detailed to work on a regular basis in the Conservation site

office, where they answered queries and took action on a variety of problems posed by other municipal personnel, district staff, recipients and residents. Frequent conferences were held between district staff and department personnel on individual cases. As the program matured in Bloomingdale, assigned personnel began to meet with staff almost on a weekly basis to consult about problems of common concern and plan action on individual cases. After a year's experience, East Harlem arranged semi-monthly meetings between its professional social workers and Welfare's social investigators. At these sessions, case materials which were of special significance were presented and recommendations for action made. The goals here were not only to render better services but, in the words of Community Service Society, "... demonstrate the mutual-ity of goals and help change the approach from a lay to a professional case-aid one."

As indicated in Chapter Five, much of the work of the Department of Welfare in Conservation areas revolved around various facets of relocation. Equally pertinent to the Program's objectives were services rendered to public assistance recipients not affected by relocation. Local welfare centers serving Bloomingdale and Chelsea followed up "Poor Housekeeping Forms" developed by the Department of Buildings' inspectors by helping to show their clientele the best means of overcoming adverse housekeeping and sanitation practices. Funds were provided by these and other centers for additional furniture, household articles, clothing and other essential items that allowed public assistance families to live better lives in the districts. There was also a constant process of intra- and inter-agency referrals, which allowed the local welfare offices to render more intensive and specialized services to families and individuals, thereby helping to overcome some medical, psychiatric, marital, narcotic and parole problems.

To meet its overriding goal of rendering services that would "... enable families to become self-maintaining within the shortest possible time period," the Amsterdam Welfare Center started a number of special projects. Welfare workers began to meet with Department of Health personnel to review case situations involving medical and narcotics problems and plan their resolution with the aid of expert medical opinion. Increasingly, the center turned to other governmental bodies—the New York City Housing Auth-

ority, the New York State Employment Service, the Youth Board—to meet its clients' specialized needs. Also, it turned to a private social agency, the Chelsea-Lowell office of the Community Service Society, to help attain its rehabilitative goals. In this connection, the center selected ten percent of its clientele residing on one of the pilot blocks, after which case materials were shared on a confidential basis with the private agency's professional social workers. The latter reviewed the cases, prepared diagnostic evaluations and assisted the public agency in planning rehabilitative services for families and individuals. As a result of this guidance, and the intensified services that were rendered, the center noted significant improvements in the life situations of some of the respondents.¹⁴

District social welfare problems were not confined to public assistance recipients. Realizing this, but unsure of the incidence and types of problems which confront self-supporting individuals and families, the Amsterdam Welfare Center, the Neighborhood Conservation Program and the Community Service Society proposed the extension of the foregoing project to respondents in Chelsea not receiving public assistance. The center, which was especially interested in gaining a fuller understanding of its clientele by comparing them with a sample of marginal income families, agreed to join C.S.S. in initiating the project. To do so, the parties enlisted the aid of Catholic Charities, St. Vincent's Hospital, the Salvation Army, the Mental Hygiene Clinic of Hudson Guild, and the Lower West Side Health Center of the Department of Health. Research staff chose a ten percent sample of the residents of two blocks in Chelsea then undergoing Conservation treatment. The 61 respondents chosen were subsequently divided on an equitable basis among the cooperating agencies, after which structured interviews were administered. As revealed to the respondents, the purpose of the study was to evaluate housing conditions and other human needs as a basis for improving available or creating new services to meet unfilled needs. The project was also formulated to better coordinate services for marginal income families in Chelsea.

During the term of the project, interviews were consummated with 43 respondents. The demographic and housing information uncovered was instructive:

"Of the people interviewed, 18 were Puerto Rican



Social worker visits SRO room of woman recently arrived from Puerto Rico to explain program.

of whom only 3 were non-English speaking; 18 White; 6 Negro; and the race of one was unknown. Twenty were of the Catholic religion, 5 were Protestants, 2 were Jewish and the religion of five was unknown. The majority were between the ages of 20 to 50. The duration of residence on the two blocks was for the most part of 5 years or less. The majority of the tenants lived in furnished units. Most of these were 1 and 1½ rooms in size, without cooking facilities, and with hall bathrooms which were shared by several tenants. Of those in furnished rooms, there were 20 single adults and six who were separated from their spouses, one of them an unmarried mother. Nineteen were married, most of them with children under sixteen years of age."

In assessing the problems, it was found that housing for the majority of respondents was either inadequate *per se* or failed to meet their special physical

or emotional needs. Other significant problems were found in the areas of health, parent-child relations, recreational services and marital understanding. Economic and housing problems confronting some families were such that they were prevented from living together. Adequate follow-up care by medical and psychiatric social workers was noted as another serious problem.¹⁵

The project had two dimensions. On one level, it allowed the participating agencies to help redress a number of critical neighborhood-rooted, social welfare problems. On another, it enabled the cooperating units, including the Chelsea Conservation District, to better assess overall social welfare problems and suggest areas of action that could be taken to improve housing and related conditions in this and other districts.

Because of limited resources, it was not usually possible for Conservation staff to become involved in

case work. Even though each district had at least one trained social worker, their duties were usually restricted to referral activities. These were extensive: In Chelsea during one six-month period, 1,800 referrals were made, most of them involving a great deal of time and energy of social work staff. Covering a wide range of problems, referral efforts resulted especially from contacts with residents made during the course of inspectional and tenant organization efforts. The services rendered resulted in the amelioration or solution of a number of adverse situations and were of significance in providing a needed informational service to neighborhood residents.¹⁶

The one major exception to this pattern of limited case work occurred in East Harlem. In this office, short term case work services were offered to tenants where the focus of the problem was directly related to Conservation objectives. Arising out of reviews of the interviews conducted with tenants at the start of the Program, case work activities sometimes brought to light broader community problems which required action on the part of district staff. One instance of this approach resulted in the initial involvement of the Department of Hospitals in the Conservation Program; the solution of a particularly troublesome medical problem; and a small though significant improvement in hospital services for the entire community.

There have been both notable successes and failures in the Program's approach to social welfare problems. There have been significant advances in some districts in services to public assistance recipients, especially in terms of relocation activities and in the provision of additional goods and services for those in substantial need. Intra- and inter-departmental coordination and cooperation have allowed local welfare centers to provide services in a more humane and efficient manner than was heretofore the case. Special projects have been useful in enlarging the understanding of social welfare needs and illustrating what can be done to further rehabilitative goals, and, thus, helping to shatter both complacency and discouragement in public welfare programs. Then, too, relocation has had a significant impact on the work of individual welfare centers through the reduction of caseloads, though similar gains have not accrued to units in other boroughs which have borne the brunt of the displacements caused by the Program's code enforcement ef-

forts.

On the debit side, the Program has noted wide variances in the work of various administrative units of the Welfare Department, local welfare centers, case units and individual social investigators. In the negative cases, as described by one district, "... there is not even a beginning of an understanding of, much less a commitment to rehabilitation as a service to clients." In the words of another, "... the quality of work of some social investigators is mediocre at best ... only at a point of crisis is action taken." In many cases, this has meant services have not been rendered promptly or adequately or have been strengthened only at an enormous cost in terms of the resources of district and departmental personnel. None of this has been helped by extensive rigidities in some Welfare laws, policies and procedures or by personnel turnover, personnel shortages, and the lack of professionally trained staff. The detrimental effects of almost staggering caseloads on the Department's rehabilitative goals is as obvious as it is far-reaching.

Private agencies share with public bodies the blame for lack of cooperation in social welfare tasks. Along with schools of social work, they seem to evidence an inability to develop new techniques to deal with problems associated with dependency and despondency, particularly as these are exhibited by culturally-deprived, minority group families and individuals. Rather than reaching out to the alienated, some private agencies have tended to restrict services to well-motivated clients. Most important of all, neither public nor private agencies have anything even remotely approaching the resources that are needed to solve neighborhood-based social welfare problems. At best then, a beginning has been made in meeting these problems in the relatively well-served Neighborhood Conservation Districts.

The Economic Environment: A Beginning

Perhaps the most conspicuous failure in formulating the Conservation concept was that of almost completely disregarding the economic status of district residents. Though limited to a distinct minority of the population served, poverty, underemployment and unemployment were fundamental causes of a number of housing and social welfare problems and, thus, con-

tributed as much to neighborhood decline as their resolution offered one possible key to community resurgence.

The pragmatic nature of the Program allowed the districts to at first meet this aspect of the human side of neighborhood renewal by referring individuals to public and private agencies concerned with employment problems. This was the case whether or not low economic status was discerned as a major problem through special health, mental health or social welfare projects, as a result of contacts with tenants at the site offices, or through in-building programs. In any event, appropriate contacts were made, oftentimes with good results.

A more comprehensive approach to neighborhood-based economic problems began when public and private employment agencies sought the help of the districts in their work. Carnegie Hill, for instance, was asked by the East Harlem office of the Youth Employment Service of the New York State Department of Labor to refer out-of-school, out-of-work youth for possible employment opportunities. Along with other districts, Carnegie Hill also participated in the Fundamental Adult Education Program of the City's Departments of Labor and Welfare; a project which was inaugurated in the summer of 1963 and designed to provide remedial education to adults who were otherwise qualified to undertake unskilled or semi-skilled employment. Though not particularly successful due to its timing and content, the project had the benefit of stressing the potential importance of the district offices as special recruitment centers, as well as attuning staff to newly emerging employment programs.

This pattern continued with the participation of Hamilton-Grange, Chelsea, Morningside and all of the Area Services district in the effort to register minority group members for possible placement in apprenticeship opportunities and journeymen positions in the skilled construction trades. Acting in cooperation with the City's Department of Labor in this venture, the district offices distributed over 50,000 leaflets in recruiting nearly 600 applicants who were referred to a union-management selection committee. Unfortunately, the administrative procedures were so loosely drawn—and the real power to hire so absolutely vested in the hands of officials of participating craft unions—that most of those referred were never even granted inter-

views, to say nothing of jobs, all to the detriment of the effectiveness of the Program.

More positive was the initiation of a special employment service in the Bedford-Stuyvesant Area Services office. It served to describe the dimensions of, and the techniques that could be used to resolve neighborhood-based employment problems. As a result of the work of this office—which achieved substantial employment breakthroughs in retail stores servicing the area in less than six months—Hamilton-Grange participated in a special World's Fair recruitment program, placing 75 district residents in economically rewarding, though generally non-skilled employment at Flushing Meadows.

The work of the Brooklyn district has provided a model for the intensification of public and private employment services on a neighborhood basis; the potential coordination of the employment efforts of the Program with Job Orientation In Neighborhoods, the City and State Departments of Labor, the Vocational Rehabilitation Service of the Department of Welfare and the employment services of the Youth Board and Board of Education; and the possible use of Conservation and Area Services districts as administrative units in the implementation of the City's war against poverty, as this is described in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

Protecting and Educating Consumers

Almost from their start, Neighborhood Conservation Districts were involved in consumer education and protection projects. Mainly as a result of the problems which tenants brought to the attention of staff through site-office or in-building contacts, these projects were given impetus through the work of nutritionists, and public health sanitarians. Again imitating the Bedford-Stuyvesant Area Services district, more extensive consumer education projects are being planned by a number of districts.¹⁷

Bettering Recreational Facilities

With the exception of Chelsea, all of the Conservation Districts had at least adequate and oftentimes superb recreational and park facilities.¹⁸ Bloomingdale and Hudson share Riverside Park; Carnegie Hill abuts on Central Park, as does East Harlem in terms of Jef-

erson Park. Morningside and Hamilton-Grange have, respectively, Morningside and St. Nicholas Parks on the edge of their districts. Most of the public schools in the areas have playgrounds; other recreational facilities are available in community centers or settlement houses serving the neighborhoods.

As a general rule, these facilities were not being used to anything even approaching their capacity or advantage when the districts launched their programs. Under-utilization was generally the result of either fear about using recreational resources on the part of some long-time residents or lack of knowledge about the existence of such facilities among many newcomers to the districts. Whatever the cause, one of the effects was that the facilities themselves began to decline, presenting district staff with the dual problem of spurring the refurbishment of the physical plant and starting recreational programs that would help attract residents to parks, playgrounds and indoor recreational facilities.

As previously mentioned, Carnegie Hill moved towards this goal by converting a refuse-strewn vacant lot to a quiet play and recreational area. It facilitated the expanded use of recreational facilities in Central Park by organizing neighborhood youth into athletic teams and by cooperating with the Department of Parks in attracting children and adults to special shows offered by that agency. District youngsters were helped to attend a "sleep away" camp during the summer and were encouraged to enroll in the day camp program of a local settlement house. Additionally, the project was instrumental in obtaining a playstreet during the summer of 1962 and 1963, this under the auspices of the Police Athletic League.

In its application to the Housing and Home Finance Agency for survey and planning funds for the Morningside General Neighborhood Renewal Plan Area, the Housing and Redevelopment Board suggested that Morningside Park could be developed to serve as a bridge between the residents of Morningside Heights and southwest Harlem. Previously it had been a barrier because of the high incidence of crime within its boundaries and the erection, on its western boundary, of a fence with gates that were locked at night; a situation that caused some Harlem residents to dub the structure as New York City's "East German Wall."

To help build the bridge, Morningside took a number of steps. Early in its program, it helped to secure

increased police protection for the park, which, along with new street lighting, did much to alleviate criminal activities within its precincts. It induced the Parks Department to repair and refurbish benches and equipment to make the area more attractive. Morningside worked with the Department of Parks and the Play School Association to motivate youngsters to engage in constructive recreational activities in the park and adjoining playgrounds. In so doing, it countered rumors that these resources were not available to neighborhood youngsters. It also plans to work closely with Morningside Heights, Inc. and Columbia University in the special athletic programs which they are developing for youth who reside both to the east and west of Morningside Park. These efforts, which were started during Morningside's first summer, became increasingly effective the following summer and should have special force as overall plans for improved recreational facilities are developed.

Hudson, in cooperation with the Goddard-Riverside Community Center, other settlement houses and community organizations, initiated a swimming program for neighborhood youngsters in the facilities of the Columbia Grammar School, a private school located to the east of the district. Meeting a particularly acute summertime need on Manhattan's West Side, the program was made possible through grants from the Frederick W. Richmond Foundation, the Audrey S. and Thomas B. Hess Foundation, the Thomas B. Wyman Foundation and services provided by the Board of Education. The district has also given support to local community efforts designed to upgrade play space in Riverside Park.

East Harlem's approach to recreation in general and Jefferson Park in particular reflects the philosophy of its sponsoring body, the Community Service Society. Essentially, it is that the park cannot become an asset to the neighborhood unless and until the conditions which have given rise to its decline have been solved. In this view, only then can intergroup tensions and juvenile delinquency and crime—problems which have inhibited the full and positive use of the park's facilities—be resolved and Jefferson Park take its rightful position as a neighborhood asset. Acting on this premise, East Harlem has sought to improve the park by helping to solve the housing and social problems faced by the residents of surrounding blocks. To the

extent that these have been ameliorated through social work techniques and the sense of neighborhood pride and self-esteem increased, improvements have been noted in the social atmosphere of Jefferson Park itself. Additional social and physical improvements may take place as the East Harlem program develops and the general upgrading process gains an even greater foothold in the community, and, of course, conversely.

Bloomington's park and recreational program was of special significance. In late February, 1960, staff brought to the attention of officials of the Department of Parks the fact that Riverside Park was virtually unused between 96th and 110th Streets. A high percentage of residents seldom ventured into its paths and woodlands and few children used its ball fields or playgrounds. This was partially the result of the facility's isolation, as well as a function of the lack of recreational and security personnel.

By late March, an agreement was reached with the Parks Department to restore, refurbish and upgrade the playground on the lower level of the park at 102nd Street. To do so, temporary heating was installed in the field house, attendants and recreational personnel assigned and police services augmented. To publicize Riverside Park's "new look," Bloomington conducted a number of campaigns. Opening day ceremonies were scheduled and included games, field races and stories for youngsters. In the accompanying publicity, emphasis was placed on the fact that it was "now safe down below" and recreational personnel were available on a regularly scheduled basis. Bloomington followed this preparatory work by arranging for a "Family Fun Day" in the park. Working in cooperation with Grosvenor Neighborhood House, local schools, parent-teacher organizations and volunteers, the event was given wide currency through leaflets, a carriage parade, posters and the entire network of informal neighborhood communications. Over 350 children and adults participated in the program through a variety of activities. Coupled with a "May Day Dance Festival" held by one of the public schools, the idea became current among long-time residents that the park was indeed safe and, for newcomers, that it indeed existed. This, in turn was reflected in the increased use of its facilities by both middle and low-income residents.

Out of these activities came the proposal for in-

itiating a creative, family-centered recreational and educational program in Riverside Park. As seen by its innovators, the program was designed to provide opportunities for pleasure, sports and learning, while also attempting to bridge the cultural chasm between Bloomingdale residents. It had as a direct objective the renewal of neighborhood pride and identification. As a start, the program concentrated on supervised play and crafts for pre-school youngsters; competitive sports for those between 6 and 16; and cultural, educational and recreational programs for adults.

To achieve these objectives, Bloomington used the Program's interdisciplinary, public-private approach to neighborhood renewal. The Day Care Division of the Department of Health assigned a parent educator to the project; the Board of Education detailed a recreational worker; and the Parks Department provided recreational specialists and attendants. A trained coordinator for the family program, which included a number of volunteers from the Bloomingdale Conservation Association, was secured through a donation from the Benjamin Rosenthal Foundation. The Heckscher Foundation provided needed equipment and supplies, as did the Parks Department, Grosvenor Neighborhood House, individual donors and Bloomingdale residents.

By July, 1960, and on a typical day, over 100 families were using the recently shunned facilities. In the mornings, pre-school youngsters engaged in painting crafts, games and other activities, their parents serving as assistants to professional staff. In the afternoons, the pre-school program continued and was implemented by activities for older youngsters. Throughout the day, parents engaged in informal and then formal discussions over a wide range of child behavior and community problems. They became directly involved by participating in programs for their children and, indirectly, by their children's participation in the program. Daily, volunteers and professional staff visited "target" buildings throughout Bloomingdale to acquaint disadvantaged families with the program and arrange for their participation in the activities. Weekly, the program became increasingly though not spectacularly integrated. Monthly, it thrived as more and more Bloomingdale residents availed themselves of various features of the project.

Continuing through the Indian summer weather of October, the project had a major impact on the



Bloomington's pre-school program in action in the previously slummed facilities of Riverside Park

neighborhood and the park. Criminal or anti-social behavior diminished appreciably and vandalism was minimal. Recreational facilities were, if anything, overutilized, though depreciation was not what would be expected because of the organized nature of the activities. Parents and children were given a breathing spell from each other and the oftentimes teeming streets and sidewalks of the community. Some parents commented that they had been helped in understanding child behavioral problems, which was no doubt true of the children vis-a-vis their parents. The community was drawn closer together through the program, which was described by one mother in a letter to the Mayor as "this wonderful gift for my child." In terms of the

public and private agencies involved, the commissioner of the Department of Health apparently summed up the feeling stating that a beginning had been made:

" . . . to solve some of the problems that members of our own staff have worried about, to my knowledge, over the last fifteen years."

Sensing an important breakthrough on a variety of problems, staff and residents formulated plans for the continuation of the program during the winter months. After much searching, adequate space for a program for pre-school children, children on split-school schedules and parents was found in the facilities of the Children's Center at Douglass Houses, a

Housing Authority development immediately to the east of Bloomingdale. Contributed by the Children's Aid Society, the space provided an ideal setting for the program and the continuing effort to have the families of executives and welfare recipients share more than the streets of Bloomingdale.

Since the Board of Education and the Department of Parks were unable to participate, staff needs were met by increased participation on the part of the Department of Health and the assignment of personnel by the New York City Housing Authority, the Children's Aid Society and the West Side Day Nursery. The latter made a valuable cash contribution which allowed the project to supplement or replace equipment provided by the Children's Aid Society, the Heckscher Foundation, the Department of Parks and the now organized parents' group.

In operation from November through May, the indoor family program followed the same general format that had been started in Riverside Park. It was, thus, neither a cooperative nursery nor a day care center but a community resource which provided recreational and educational service for parents and children from a variety of backgrounds. As in the park, staff, volunteers and parents participated in a continuing evaluation of the goals and procedures of the project and in implementing ideas which arose out of this process. One of these was to use the parent educators assigned by the Department of Health to make periodic visits to "hard-to-reach families" to encourage them to enroll their children in the program and other neighborhood activities. Coordinated with the Bloomingdale in-building program, some of the visits were fruitful; others discouraging. All in all, though, they helped to attract 200 youngsters and parents from differing backgrounds during a typical winter month.

With the advent of warm weather, the program moved back to Riverside Park. City departments and cooperating private agencies continued to participate through the summer and into the early fall of 1961, at which time Douglass Houses again became the home for the project and integration was furthered through selective recruitment of children and parents. The same process was repeated in 1962 and 1963. Throughout this period, new elements were added to the program: a miniature zoo, field trips, jazz concerts, recruitment and employment of staff from within the neighbor-

hood, meetings of parents in penthouses and public housing apartments. Overall, the activity was expanded both in terms of the Bloomingdale residents who participated and in the quality of services they received. In the words of one who was at first extremely skeptical about the project, "The Upper West Side has become the most desirable area in New York City for raising pre-school children."¹⁹

As is common with a number of special Conservation projects, the Riverside Park program engendered a re-examination of the entire concept of what a park and related recreational activities should be. Out of this evaluation came a plan for the physical redevelopment of the Bloomingdale segment of the park into a culturally and aesthetically pleasing, family-centered facility. As envisaged by its planners—neighborhood residents, other interested citizens, Bloomingdale staff, the artist Yosamu Noguchi and the architect, Louis Kahn, the Department of Parks—the proposed facility will combine sculpture, landscape architecture and creative play equipment in a daring yet utilitarian facility on all three levels of the park. Designed for all age groups, the plan contemplates an all-purpose building, enclosing a natural amphitheater, surrounded by an ingenious play-scape. The facility, which will be opened all day, all week, all year, is to be financed through a private grant of \$500,000 in the memory of Adele R. Levy and matched by Department of Parks capital funds.

As is common with almost any redevelopment plan in New York City, the proposal engendered a fairly significant and highly vocal opposition. Charging Bloomingdale with failure to have wider community involvement in the planning of the facility, and secretiveness prior to the Board of Estimate hearing on planning funds, the opposition was made up in part by individuals truly concerned with the best development of the area and in part by members of the "don't-touch-a-blade-of-grass school" of park supporters. Another portion of the opposition seems to have stemmed simply and solely from racial and ethnic bigotry. Interestingly, only a few members of the group were active in Bloomingdale affairs until this issue arose.

To counter the opposition, Bloomingdale was instrumental in forming a Neighborhood Council for the Redevelopment of Riverside Park. As a result of its

organizational efforts, the picketing by the opposition of the homes of two major contributors to the facility, and the nature of the design, community sentiment veered sharply in support of the redevelopment plans, as reflected in an editorial in the NEW YORK TIMES:

" . . . that this playground would be a genuine improvement of the park and would serve truly park purposes. We are more often than not opposed to putting buildings in parks, whether for a cafe or some other reason. But Messrs. Kahn and Noguchi have skillfully and imaginatively taken

advantage of the contours in a way that improves the landscaping without any new above-ground structures . . . This is a proper use of park land for park purposes."

When completed—funds are allocated in the 1964-1965 capital budget—the facility should serve as a recreational prototype for the entire City and symbolize how, in a relatively short period of time, a neighborhood can not only help reverse deterioration, but become an extremely desirable area in which to live, work and play.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Community Service Society, *Searchlight on New York*, Progress Report on Human Welfare in New York City, 1960, p. 29.

² Announcements in both Spanish and English were distributed to parochial and public schools by volunteers, who also taped circulars to lamp posts throughout the district. News stories about the health program and the schedule of the mobile units were placed in neighborhood newspapers. Radio stations carried spot announcements on the day of inoculation programs. Residents assisted in the project and helped out at the mobile unit, as did Peace Corps volunteers.

³ Of importance, too, was the fact that degenerative joint disease prevented the administration of specialized examinations to many of the respondents. There was also great reluctance on the part of some female respondents to submit to cystological examinations since they were asymptomatic or, fearing that malignancy might be found, unwilling to submit to surgery at this period in their lives.

⁴ The Bedford-Stuyvesant Area Services Project began a comprehensive program to upgrade the area's health and hospital facilities in the spring of 1964.

⁵ The materials in this section are based on the Annual Report, New York University School of Education, Department of Nurse Education, 1961, and Bloomingdale staff reports.

⁶ Carnegie Hill and Hamilton-Grange are planning special health projects in their communities in conjunction with the social services divisions of the private hospitals servicing the areas. Hudson started a housing clinic in the sub-station of the local Child Health Clinic to provide an interdisciplinary approach to health and housing problems.

⁷ Bloomingdale has been instrumental in assisting a private psychiatric center to secure a site on the west side of Manhattan and provide residents with much needed, minimal fee diagnostic and treatment services. It was also a party to plans which led to the initiation of a community psychiatric service at the Riverside Health Center and St. Luke's Hospital. Similarly, East Harlem has entered into negotiations with the School of Psychiatry of the New York Medical College to undertake a study of emotional problems and needs in that district.

⁸ Department of Welfare, Department of Health, Police Department, Community Psychiatry Division of St. Luke's Hospital, the Salvation Army, the Community Service Society, Goddard-Riverside Neighborhood House.

⁹ Carnegie Hill, which raised over \$3,000 to carry out the project, utilized its facility during school hours for a neighborhood sewing club and, on Saturday mornings, art and craft classes, both of which were manned by neighborhood volunteers.

¹⁰ The East Harlem Triangle Area Services Project expanded the Conservation curriculum concept by extending the project to all schools in its area at almost all grade levels. As developed by the staff and administrators of the schools of the district, the curriculum was expanded to include materials that were meaningful and realistic to neighborhood youth. As an example, arithmetical problems were based on the costs of vandalism, the rewards of comparative shopping, the rent structure of buildings, and the wages of housing inspectional and social welfare personnel. The Area Services office supported the effort by motivating parents to volunteer their services to the schools and inaugurating joint school-community improvement efforts, all under the aegis of "Operation Pride."

¹¹ Community Service Society, *op. cit.*, p. 25

¹² Data supplied by the Department of Welfare. By April, 1964, 3,366 families were receiving public assistance in the seven districts. Bloomingdale with 516 cases, East Harlem with 844 cases, Hamilton-Grange with 331 cases and Chelsea with 341 cases were up because of geographical expansion of the districts; Hudson was down 1,111, mainly because of relocation; and Carnegie Hill with 139 cases and Morningside with 84 cases were virtually unchanged because of the absence of the expansion and relocation factors.

¹³ The major reason for this was that, during one point in late 1961, there were 200 uncovered caseloads in the City, of which 17 were centered in a Welfare Center serving one of the districts. On an average, each caseload was composed of 75 families. Thus, it was virtually impossible for the Welfare Department to reduce caseloads in Conservation Districts. In the summer of 1962, an appropriation of \$100,000 was made to reduce caseloads to 45 per social investigator in the Hudson Conservation District and the West Side Area Services Project, South.

¹⁴ Materials in this section are based on reports of the Amsterdam Welfare Center of the Department of Welfare.

¹⁵ This section is derived from reports prepared by the participating agencies, as summarized by the Chelsea-Lowell Office of the Community Service Society in July, 1961.

¹⁶ One of the most valuable contributions of the Conservation offices has been that of intelligently leading residents through the labyrinth of public and private services in New York City, as the Citizens Housing and Planning Commission noted.

¹⁷ In this district, local staff directed and cooperated with the Department of Markets, Department of Health, Commission on Human Rights, block organizations, and P.T.A.'s in a special survey of conditions prevailing in super-markets in the predominantly Negro, greater Bedford-Stuyvesant community. Volunteer teams checked prices, the quality of meats and produce, the quantity and variety of foods, displays, services, employment and general condition of the stores, comparing all of these to conditions in super-markets in predominantly white neighborhoods. Uncovering a variety of adverse situations, the chains were prevailed upon to correct various malpractices. The enforcement agencies were not used, but their possible employment was implicit throughout the drive. Because of the success of the venture, the campaign was extended to retail meat, furniture and clothing stores; a neighborhood consumer council formed; and overtures made to the Small Business Administration for financial assistance for Negro businesses in the area.

¹⁸ Because of the dearth of facilities, Chelsea has concentrated on the establishment of year-round play streets in its district. In addition, residents have been exploring with the Planning Commission and the Parks Department the feasibility of converting the site which was not found suitable for publicly-assisted housing to a small park.

¹⁹ Beginning in the fall of 1963, the winter program was moved to the new facilities of Grosvenor Neighborhood House, in keeping with the Program's objective of devising and testing new housing and social action techniques and then transferring them to organizations or institutions permanently rooted in the community. Interestingly, residents of the neighborhood banded together and raised the resources needed to continue the program in the vacated premises of the Children's Aid Society. As a result, Bloomingdale was provided with two resources to meet the needs of pre-school children and their parents.

Chapter 10

ASSISTING, EDUCATING AND ORGANIZING TENANTS

Introduction

Most Conservation property owners invariably blamed tenants for the decline of the housing stock. Some residents and community groups voiced concern about deleterious housing and social conditions which, in their view, could be traced to destructive tenants. Public and private agencies noted that there was little likelihood of lasting improvements in Neighborhood Conservation Districts unless and until residents could be helped to live up to their responsibilities as tenants, neighbor and members of the larger community. On another level, observers and participants were deeply concerned about conditions facing low-income tenants and troubled about the assistance they were receiving in meeting problems indigenous to urban areas. The tenants themselves, confronted with the complex task of adjusting to a northern industrial environment, rarely knew to whom they could turn for help or how to take measures that would improve their life situations.

Some of these problems were overcome by improving available, or initiating new, social services. These measures generally encompassed problems which residents faced outside of their living accommodations. They did not meet the challenge of fostering positive change in day-to-day living situations within buildings or in intra-neighborhood relations. To meet these challenges, district staff initiated programs of tenant assistance, education and organization in target buildings in the seven neighborhoods singled out for housing and social improvements.

Trial and Error

In its formative stages, Conservation was at a loss in developing a process whereby residents could be helped to overcome situations of concern to them and the neighborhood. In first contacts with low-income tenants there was very little response: while a few

seemed interested in the project, the vast majority were apathetic about Conservation's specific methods and goals. One consequence was that neighborhood meetings were confined almost exclusively to property owners and middle-class residents. Involvement in volunteer activities showed the same pattern.

It was evident that something had to be done quickly to assist, educate and organize tenants in target buildings. To do so, Bloomingdale staff sought to initiate a tenant-centered program by calling meetings with residents of buildings undergoing inspectional treatment. One was scheduled at night in a public school directly across the street from the high rise, multiple dwelling; two residents appeared. Changing pace, Bloomingdale sought to involve tenants by providing them with what were thought to be needed services, after which organizational and educational activities were to commence. In cooperation with the Board of Education, special classes were arranged to teach Spanish-speaking adults English and housewives sewing. Held in a local school within short walking distance of the pilot block, the program petered out in a few weeks as the never high enrollment dwindled to almost nothing.

Similarly discouraging results were in evidence in Chelsea. There, teams of volunteers and staff attempted to organize residents of the area's rooming houses. Meetings were called at the site office and in public buildings. Attendance was unusually low and was attributable not only to the high mobility of the area's population but to the fears and tensions brought about by the initiation of the Conservation effort. The district also sought to gain increased involvement by initiating services for the neighborhood's low-income residents. As one example, staff formulated plans for a fashion show, which had the purpose of demonstrating to residents better consumer purchasing practices. It was believed that this event would be of special interest to

Footnotes for this chapter are on page 173.



Tenant organization began at the front door and extended floor by floor in Hudson



Staff, volunteers and neighbors assist a resident as part of the Urban Extension Service

low-income families, as well as being dramatic in its appeal to all family members. Securing donations of clothing from a large mail order concern, wide publicity was given to the show. Over 300 persons attended. Apparently successful in itself, the event was really designed to provide the vehicle for contacting a fairly large segment of the community and, hopefully, involving them in specific, tenant-oriented programs. To do so, arrangements were made to sign up members of the audience for a homemaking course that would be conducted by a Department of Welfare home eco-

nomist and a Department of Health nutritionist. Ten residents returned cards after a few weeks, even this small group declined markedly; eventually, the project was cancelled.

Confronted with the same inability to reach and involve tenants in other districts, the Program was at a virtual standstill as to how to proceed in this phase of its activities. It was clear, however, that programs based on middle-class premises and imposed on alienated, low-income residents would not work. Something new had to be tried.

The In-Building Program

Through its real estate advisory service, the Program had already borrowed the Department of Agriculture's concept of involvement through service at the focal point of problems and interests; in the case of farmers, the farm. It prepared to do the same thing for urban residents at the focal point of their problems and interests, the apartment house. Developed at first in Bloomingdale, the in-building program involved an extensive campaign to educate tenants about Conservation and its methodology. As a first step, leaflets were distributed to residents of target buildings. They stated that the local office was interested in improving housing and social conditions in the recipient's building. Admitting that this would not be achieved overnight, the flyers did promise that staff would send inspectors to the building to uncover code violations; meet with the landlord to help insure that the building was upgraded; and relocate overcrowded families to safe, sound and sanitary apartments. Tenants were asked to help in the project and advised that a building meeting would be called in the near future.

Thereafter, personal visits were made by staff and volunteers to at least 80 percent of the dwelling units. In these visits, a fuller explanation of Conservation was given and a concise interview schedule administered. Previously trained in interviewing techniques, volunteers elicited demographic, economic and housing information. Queries were also posed to bring out problems of special concern to individual tenants, and an attempt was made to identify individuals with leadership potential. Based on an analysis of the schedules, inspectors were alerted to adverse housing conditions and began their inspections with the benefit of this background information. Problems related to the general physical condition of the building were passed on to the landlord; other situations were brought to the attention of cooperating departments. An immediate attempt was made to provide casework and related social welfare and health services for those in obvious need. Tenants with leadership potential were contacted, given a more detailed explanation about the Program and asked to help assume direction of improvement effort within their particular building.

After inspections were in progress, a meeting was

usually called in a large apartment or in the lobby of the building. Preceding the meeting, staff and volunteers reminded tenants of the session and invited their attendance. During the meeting, the Program and its benefits was explained in detail and residents apprised of their rights and obligations. Open discussion on problems of mutual concern followed and, at the end of the meeting, a temporary committee was usually formed to arrange future participation and act as a conduit between staff and residents. Following the meeting, inspections and other upgrading measures continued, and, where possible, the services of the previously mentioned N.Y.U. nurses, the Department of Welfare's special social work task force and the Riverside Park Family Program were inaugurated in the target building.

Subsequent meetings were held after some progress had been made towards ameliorating housing and social problems. At these sessions, more emphasis was placed on the obligation of tenants to insure that gains were maintained and further improvements carried out. Sensing that concrete improvements were being made, and that the Program "really cared about our problems," tenants tended to take a greater interest in maintenance problems and their own sanitation and housekeeping practices. They also began to demand better services from property owners and janitors and began to police the adverse practices of other tenants.

It was evident that decided improvements had taken place in the physical and social atmosphere of some buildings as a result of the urban extension service. Previously apathetic tenants began to take an interest in the condition of their apartments, buildings and, in some cases, blocks and neighborhoods. In opposition, interest tended to flag as inspections were completed, violations removed and other problems resolved. High mobility impaired the project, particularly when the relocation of overcrowded families resulted in significant population turnover, and families were replaced by couples or unrelated individuals. More devastating was the failure or slowness of code enforcement efforts in some buildings. In these cases, district staff simply could not produce results; faith of the residents in the project was quite naturally lost or seriously impaired. Yet, interest and concern were evi-



Chelseas residents sample dishes prepared from surplus food stocks made available by the Federal Government

dent in most of the cases and it appeared that, with an additional effort, increased tenant awareness and involvement could take place in a number of buildings.

What appeared to be an actual breakthrough came about almost by accident in October, 1960, in one of Bloomingdale's old-law tenements. As a matter of course, staff and volunteers began to make contact with the building's 100 families in preparation for an in-building program. The property owner made an unused loft available for the first meeting. Twenty-three tenants from this predominantly Spanish-speaking building attended and appeared to be moderately interested in the program. At the close of the meeting, the residents remained, taking this opportunity to meet and talk with their neighbors. Staff readily saw the possibility of structuring future meetings in such a way that the basic need to socialize with one's fellows could be integrated into the in-building program.

Subsequently, the landlord was prevailed upon to make the loft available once a week on a regularly scheduled basis. An evening recreation program for children—borrowing concepts, techniques and materials from the Riverside Park Family Program — was started. As the weeks progressed, the children eagerly anticipated the project. One, seeing a staff member approaching, cried out: "Look, look, it's Bloomingdale!! I want to paint it!!! " Relieved from the task of overseeing their children at least one night a week, parents began to volunteer their services. The non-authoritarian approach of staff and volunteers apparently gave residents the feeling that "Bloomingdale was really interested, really cared about our problems." Imperceptibly at first, then obviously, tenants showed an increasing sense of responsibility towards the owners and their property and began to show marked warmth and friendliness to those involved in the ex-



A tenant makes a point in an East Side building meeting

periment. In the meantime, the children were having a wonderful time, even on occasion learning ballet or watching the antics of animals on tour from the miniature zoo that had been developed in Riverside Park.

A previous attempt by Bloomingdale to spark an interest in English classes had been a dismal failure. Contacts with Spanish-speaking residents of the Broadway building showed, on the other hand, that interest was high but that fear and shame about going to the local public school was such that the residents would not avail themselves of the opportunity. Accordingly, Bloomingdale brought the English classes to the building on a regularly scheduled basis, again using the loft as a base of operations. Securing a volunteer teacher from the Board of Education, classes were conducted on a level that met the concrete needs of the participants. Among other topics, members of the class learned how to call a doctor; what to say in a hardware store; how to enroll a child in school; and how to ask directions in the subway. Observers noted that the improvements in English were not spectacular, though they began to sense a change in the attitudes and feelings of the students about themselves, their building and neighborhood.

By the early Spring of 1961, the in-building-program was in progress in four of Bloomingdale's severe problem buildings. In each, services were cast to meet the special needs uncovered during interviews or in meetings and conversations with tenants. In one, the program was directed almost exclusively at a group of adolescent Negroes and Puerto Ricans who had been on fighting terms; there sports and field trips were stressed. In another, an adult recreation program was started, particular emphasis being placed on role playing as a means of promoting better housekeeping and sanitation practices. As a related value, the urban extension service was able to recruit a number of middle-class volunteers, many of whom used their particular skills to advance the program and, by indirection, help deprived tenants to help themselves. With the advent of summer, a picnic was held with the residents of the buildings receiving special services. This was an attempt to go beyond the precincts of the buildings and involve the residents in community-wide activities, as was the campaign during the summer of en-

couraging families to participate in the Riverside Park Program.

Since 1961, the Bloomingdale in-building program has been expanded as the district moved into new target buildings. The results have been mixed. Besides the previously mentioned obstacles, staff shortages have impaired the scope and depth of the projects. The inability of the project to overcome apathy and reach and involve social isolates in single room occupancy buildings has minimized its potential, as was the problem of finding suitable space for meetings in these structures. On the positive side, in-building projects have proved successful when the by now routine organizational work was strengthened through the use of audio-visual aids or supplemented through special demonstrations which were of direct and concrete benefit to low-income tenants.¹ In the words of Bloomingdale staff, "the victories were not large, to be sure, but indicate an increased social awareness on everyone's part."

Other districts have followed Bloomingdale's general format, though adding new elements. In Hudson, organizational efforts on one block led to the discovery of a number of elderly residents who were living isolated lives in small accommodations. Because of cultural, economic and socio-psychological barriers, they did not avail themselves of facilities for the elderly a block or so away. Drawing on a number of target buildings, Hudson organized a recreational facility for the group in a rent-free apartment donated by property owners. Meeting at least three hours a day, three days a week, the group was assisted in developing the self-initiative needed to become involved in the larger community.

In contrast, Hamilton-Grange's in-building program led to the formation of a junior tenants' league whose members have taken on various responsibilities within and outside their buildings. Their involvement has helped to improve the neighborhood and is a direct result of the district's attempt to focus on the day-to-day problems which residents face in their buildings. In the Hamilton-Grange case, and as problems are resolved, the prevailing pattern of apathy has been reduced and wider community involvement promoted.²

East Harlem's approach to tenant assistance, education and organization reflected more traditional so-



The elderly are reached through an "in-building" program in Hudson

cial work methods. At its inception, staff conducted interviews with over nine hundred pilot block residents. Probing deeply into social, economic, medical, marital and psychological problems and needs, the interviews provided case workers with the opportunity of assessing the strengths and weaknesses of individual family units and the social system of the block. Ameliorative services were then offered. As an example, medical and social case work services were provided to a group of alcoholics in one building; they received case work and other rehabilitative services with consequent improvements in their life situations and in the morale of neighborhood residents.

On the level of long-range planning and programming, information obtained from the interviews was used by staff to develop a comprehensive social action program. Using social-psychiatric consultant services,

personnel of the district office received intensive training in group work techniques that enabled them "... to provide skilled services and direction, while allowing for the leadership and development of (tenant organizations) to come from tenants themselves."

As a result of this approach, residents in one building brought the problems caused by an extremely destructive tenant to the attention of the staff, offering that the tenant should be "beat-up" if he engaged in any other deleterious practices. Community Service Society personnel suggested that the tenant was emotionally upset and probably needed to be hospitalized, which was done after another outbreak of vandalism on his part. Tenants were elated at the outcome of the incident and became, in the view of staff, ripe for further assistance, education and formal organization. Working on a floor-by-floor basis, individuals with lead-

ership potential were contacted and assisted in starting a building organization. Staff acted in an advisory capacity at floor and building meetings, which were conducted by the residents and covered problems perceived by them to be important.

As the organization has grown in stature and expertise, improvements have been noted in the physical and social atmosphere of the building. Equally significant, the tenants began to negotiate with the property owner for major capital improvements in the building; maintained surveillance on the quality work performed by the superintendent; and helped to organize tenants in other buildings on their block and neighborhood. Similar in-building programs are in progress elsewhere in East Harlem and may be helping to resolve problems related to particular structures, as well as improving the level of intergroup relations in the community. Many of these efforts have been frustrated by staff turnover, failures in code enforcement and building upgrading projects, and the inordinate time period involved in identifying and forming cohesive sub-groups in buildings and on blocks.³

The in-building program was a pragmatic response by the districts to the core problems of urban demoralization and disintegration, as manifested in deteriorating housing. To provide a more objective and more meaningful answer to these problems, the Program recently entered into a working arrangement with the Community Psychiatry Division of St. Lukes Hospital to extend the in-building program in depth as well as breadth. As a result, Conservation staff received advanced training in the general culture of poverty devi-

ant subgroups, such as alcoholics and narcotics addicts. Specifically designed to make staff members more aware of their generally middle-class values and interests, it is hoped that this knowledge will enhance their ability to deal with individuals of differing cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

In addition, the social psychologists, anthropologist and psychiatric social workers attached to the Division — which receives a grant from New York City's Community Mental Health Board and works in close cooperation with the Riverside Health Center of the Department of Health — consulted with district staffs on the dynamics of small group behavior and provided a better focus on the content and methodology employed in existing in-building programs. In the near future, it is hoped that research personnel of the Community Psychiatry Division and the Neighborhood Conservation Program will develop a sample of single room occupancy buildings in which participant life history and socio-metric techniques can be used to describe the buildings as social systems, thereby developing more sophisticated analytical techniques and programs which district staff and volunteers can use to rate the appropriateness, adequacy and effectiveness of their in-building efforts.

To the extent that this and other experimental approaches add to the dimensions of the in-building program, the seven districts will be able to move even further ahead in their programs of tenant assistance, education and organization and resolve this aspect of troubled neighborhoods.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Of special importance were demonstration projects organized around the use of surplus foods. Prior to these sessions, and because of cultural differences, some surplus foodstuffs were not used by tenants simply because they did not know how to prepare appropriate meals. Related and extremely interesting in-building programs have been started in a number of Area Services Districts.

² Tenant organization projects also triggered adverse reactions on the part of some property owners; in one case, a landlord provided staff with a list of "troublesome" tenants; to his horror they were appointed by the other tenants to negotiate property improvements with him.

³ East Harlem hopes to engage in a research effort that will describe its approach to tenant organization and advance generalizations which will be valid for other districts and the Program as a whole.

Chapter 11

BUILDING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Introduction

Enforcing codes, decongesting blocks, upgrading buildings, bettering the general physical environment, creating a more favorable social climate, meeting health, education, welfare, employment, consumer education and recreational needs, and assisting, educating and organizing tenants have done much to arrest the pattern of physical and social decline in Neighborhood Conservation Districts. Taken together, they have set in motion a process whereby at least four of the areas now have the potential to become stable, cohesive, vital and even exciting neighborhoods; areas that are further enhanced by social and physical diversity, basically sound housing, more stable family life and in increasing richness in community resources.

Whether or not this potential will be realized and sustained is a matter of conjecture. In the absence of the closing of a district, and given the problems related in this report, it would be speculative to predict the direction which these neighborhoods will move in the future. What is, and always was clear is that progress or retrogression will not depend solely on the efforts of public and private parties to the Neighborhood Conservation process. In the last analysis, responsibility for continuing improvements rests on the neighborhoods themselves, as the Program realized when it built citizen involvement into the upgrading effort through sponsorship, volunteer activities and community organization.

Directing the Program

Initial responsibility for resident-directed, neighborhood resurgence lay in the hands of the private sponsors of the districts. As previously indicated, sponsors made the initial overtures to start specific Neigh-

borhood Conservation Districts. They raised funds which allowed the districts to begin and have given additional financial assistance to continue and insure the integrity of the public-private nature of the venture. In cooperation with technical staff, they helped delineate the areas in which the efforts would take place. Sponsors screened and hired staff and set conditions of employment. In some cases, they helped to select site offices, pilot blocks and target buildings and were involved in local publicity campaigns and landlord-tenant meetings. In all, sponsors established policies and administrative procedures for professional employees, who worked under their direction almost on a daily basis during the initial phases of the project, and have reported to them in a routine manner as the Program has matured.

Even more significant has been the active role played by some members of the sponsoring bodies following the initiation of the projects. In Carnegie Hill, for instance, the six member steering committee of the thirty-five man Board of Trustees meets with staff at least once a month to review progress and plan future activities. Staff related its physical and social upgrading efforts to the steering committee on a building-by-building, project-by-project basis. The committee has made various action recommendations to staff, including which buildings should be inspected, owners prosecuted, departments pressured, private agencies involved and special projects started. Sub-committees of the board have analyzed various aspects of the Program, suggested changes in policies and sought to implement these decisions in meetings with public officials. Totally, their recommendations and actions have meant that community leaders have been in a position to guide and often-times direct the actions of municipal agencies.

Footnotes for this chapter are on page 181.

As a further example, the Bloomingdale steering committee has been equally involved in making decisions which govern the utilization of public and private resources and the direction which the Program has taken in that area. Individually and collectively, members have been involved in the actual work of the project. One directed volunteers and participated in the inspections of apartments for relocatees. Another, an attorney, negotiated agreements with a number of property owners covering building improvements and assisted in preparing materials for Criminal Court and Rent and Rehabilitation Administration proceedings. Other members of the committee appeared before the Planning Commission, City Council and Board of Estimate to support particular objectives or became deeply involved in the district's Riverside Park, In-Building and Get-acquainted with Bloomingdale projects.

Similar patterns of decision making and action were evidenced by the sponsors of Hudson and Hamilton-Grange. In the cases of East Harlem, Chelsea and Morningside, the same kind of decisions and activities fell on the shoulders of members of the board of directors of the individual agencies which sponsor these districts.

This fairly unique relationship between public and private agencies has not been free of conflict. On a number of occasions, some sponsoring bodies have tended to act as a pressure group, both within and outside the Program's framework. This has brought some accomplishments, some losses and some ruffled feelings. Similarly, criticism of the policies and administration of the Program have had both positive and negative results. Mixed staff loyalties to sponsors and the Program have at times hindered the effectiveness of the effort or masked responsibility for failures. Protracted, and oftentimes better negotiations covering the terms of the grant-in-aid contracts—really the distribution of power and responsibility between public and private agencies—have on occasion exacerbated relations, which have not been improved by the inherent conflict between central and district personnel and the almost feudal parochialism of some districts.

Nonetheless, a reasonably true partnership has existed between the Program and the sponsors. On almost all major substantive, and a majority of procedural matters a mutuality of interests has prevailed. Most of

the conflicts have been accommodated in a manner that has protected the Program as a whole, as well as the interests of those directly involved in grass root efforts. This novel, flexible and certainly non-bureaucratic arrangement has done much to forward the work of the districts and allow community leaders to help shape the destinies of their neighborhoods.

Volunteering for the Program

Direction of the district by the sponsoring bodies is thought to be only a half-way station to the ultimate goal of community responsibility for neighborhood development. For a variety of reasons, it was neither realistic nor even desirable for ordinary residents to assume direction of the operation at its inception or through its formative stages. On the other hand, the Program's short and long-range objectives dictated the initiation of volunteer activities that would lend concrete assistance to professional staff, open the way for the involvement of residents in various improvement efforts, and provide a transition to a resident-directed Program.

Carnegie Hill and Bloomingdale are prime examples of this principle. In the former, a group of middle and upper class neighborhood residents immediately volunteered their assistance to the district. Some helped to collect data and information for building profiles. Others performed clerical duties in the site office. As Carnegie Hill has progressed, still others became involved in the area's recreational and tree planting projects; administered interview schedules to families residing in target buildings; arranged for neighborhood youngsters to attend summer camp; attempted to find employment opportunities for the district's teenagers; and served in the study club, the sewing center and the arts and crafts program.

As recounted in another section of this report, Bloomingdale volunteers first became active through participation in relocation efforts. As the district initiated other projects, volunteers took on new roles. They handled tenant complaints and requests for assistance in the site office; acted as aide to professional staff in the Riverside Park and in-building programs; and sought to involve local agencies and institutions in related improvement activities. Tapping its wealth of talent, Bloomingdale was also able to supplement

the work of its professional staff by securing the services of a public relations counsellor to prepare the layout and format of publicity brochures; obtaining the aid of a professional fund raiser in the district's financial campaign; and accepting the services of an adult educator, who spent her vacation working in the Riverside Park project. Hudson, Chelsea and Hamilton-Grange were similarly active, the latter two drawing particularly on voluntary student help.

Especially in Carnegie Hill and Bloomingdale, residents were mobilized to help raise funds for the districts. In general, volunteers and members of the steering committees were asked to arrange "Get-Acquainted with Conservation Meetings" within their buildings or to contact friends and motivate them to do the same. At these sessions, the participants explained the Program and noted progress that had been made in reaching its goals. "Get-Acquainted" meetings served to publicize Conservation and opened the door to discussions of neighborhood problems. They also broke down anonymity and, on occasion, triggered demands for better services from property owners and public and private agencies. Marked by attendance rates that were oftentimes startlingly high for New York City, the meetings led to the formation of building committees, expanded the base of recruitment for volunteers and placed volunteer activities on a community-wide basis. Not the least important, they resulted in greater community cohesion and the raising of nearly \$20,000 in the two districts.

In the case of Morningside, volunteers were recruited from other areas of the country to help improve the neighborhood. This effort was sponsored by the Commission on Ecumenical Voluntary Service, an arm of the National Christian Student Federation of the World Council of Churches and the Church of the Master. The ten college students who participated in the experience lived in the homes of Morningside residents and other parishioners of the Church, working on Conservation tasks for a six-week period during the summer of 1961. They cleaned a vacant lot, painted the stoops of brownstones, performed clerical tasks and engaged in other physical and social upgrading efforts. The project had the special benefit of calling the attention of neighborhood residents to the Program, one result of which was that neighborhood residents also began to volunteer for Conservation duties.

The Peace Corps

Of special importance to the Program's volunteer activities was the work of contingents of Peace Corpsmen who were assigned to the districts during the past three years. In each case, the volunteers received training at the Columbia University School of Social Work to prepare them to undertake community development and neighborhood self-help projects in urban areas in Colombia and Venezuela, South America. To supplement the theoretical training provided by the School, the Neighborhood Conservation Program, along with a score of public and private agencies, agreed to supervise the field work experience of the Corpsmen.¹

Spending from sixteen to twenty work days in the districts, the Peace Corpsmen performed a variety of duties under the direction of professional staff. In Chelsea, trainees helped to overcome the problems faced by families living in overcrowded apartments while relocation was being planned. They assisted in forming an association of building superintendents, and provided recreational leadership during lunch hours for children utilizing a play street in front of one of the local schools. In the Carnegie Hill District, the trainees helped to renovate the study center and worked with marginal income families to help them participate in the surplus food program.

Peace Corpsmen in the Hudson Conservation District conducted a survey to identify individuals with health problems, and assisted those participating in the Health Department's mobile tuberculosis prevention program. In eight vermin-infested buildings in the district, they conducted educational programs related to the control of rats and roaches. They also established and serviced the previously mentioned recreation group composed of isolated, elderly welfare recipients.

Increasingly, Peace Corps volunteers have been assigned to tenant assistance, education and organization projects. As a result of this work, twenty-five buildings in four Conservation Districts have held tenant meetings to help resolve specific building maintenance problems and form on-going tenant organizations. In Chelsea, five of the buildings organized by the second group of trainees became active in block associations. In Hudson, the third group of trainees had responsibility for organizing two buildings and pro-



*A Peace Corp volunteer
and a friend in Chelsea*

TABLE 17
DISTRIBUTION OF PEACE CORPS TRAINEES BY DISTRICTS

Conservation Districts	Colombia Urban Community Action I October 1962	Colombia Urban Community Action II Oct.-Nov. 1963	Colombia Urban Community Action III March-May 1964	Venezuela Urban Community Action I	Total
Chelsea	6	3		4	13
Hudson	6	4		6	16
Bloomingdale	3	—		2	5
East Harlem	6	—		—	6
Hamilton-Grange	—	(2 for 1 after- noon per week)		4	4
Carnegie Hill	6	—		—	6
SUB-TOTAL	27	7	16		50
Area Services Projects					
West Side South	6	3		5	14
West Side North	—	—		7	7
Lower East Side	—	3		—	3
East Harlem Triangle	—	2		4	6
Claremont	—	3		—	3
SUB-TOTAL	6	11	16		33
TOTAL	33	18	32		83

SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAM

viding the nucleus for a neighborhood improvement council.

The Bloomingdale Conservation District found it more appropriate for the trainees to conduct educational programs. The objective was that of helping the residents to know each other, learn something of their rights and responsibilities as tenants, and to utilize the Program and community resources.

The volunteer manpower represented by the Corpsmen was particularly valuable in overcoming personnel shortages. It was also productive in changing the attitudes of the Corpsmen, as the following excerpts from a study of the first contingent of volunteers reveals:

"The data would seem to indicate . . . that the most useful and appropriate skills exhibited by the Peace Corpsmen at the start of the project amounted to good will and dedication, added to a more-than-average amount of energy. The Corpsmen had little understanding of the reality situations which they would have to help people to cope with. They had few of the skills of the

experienced interviewer or counselor. They were handicapped further by anxieties about the physical conditions in which they would be working."

After the training period the study indicated that the: "typical Corpsman probably learned the following: First of all, his appetite for more experience had been whetted—where he might have been somewhat anxious about working in grim surroundings, he was now feeling more comfortable. Where he had been somewhat fearful about being unwelcome, he had learned that his good will would be valued. Where he had felt uneasy about getting through language, ethnic, racial or socio-economic barriers, he had seen himself manage despite these problems—he found himself somewhat more attuned to people, more aware of differences and what they signified, and his notion of what the world of the poor was like had been changed and brought closer to reality . . . and that their mental emphasis on buildings and blocks had changed and they had come to think of the most important components of a neighborhood as its residents."²

Volunteer efforts have had an important effect in engendering community involvement and allowing the districts to undertake projects which could not otherwise have been accomplished because of staff limitations. Though self-restricted for the most part to middle-class residents, students and trainees, volunteer activities served to broaden community knowledge of, as well as interest in and concern about neighborhood problems and Conservation solutions. It also provided a vehicle for beginning the transfer of the Program from the City and sponsors to the residents of the neighborhoods themselves.

Organizing the Neighborhood

The ultimate objective of the Conservation Program was to lodge responsibility for community development in the hands of neighborhood residents. Besides squaring with the democratic theory, the vesting

of power and control of the projects in the hands of rank and file citizens should help insure the continuation of the progress related in this report. For if average residents are concerned and involved, they should be alert to physical and social changes and make the necessary demands on public and private agencies to see that adverse trends are inhibited and positive ones promoted. In turn, this should allow Conservation staff and cooperating municipal personnel to withdraw from a district after substantial successes have been registered, thereby allowing them to service other appropriate areas of the City where the application of the Conservation technique is both feasible and desirable.

To achieve these objectives, all seven projects have embarked on community organization programs, with varying effectiveness. Since incipient community organization efforts had been under way prior to the



Tree planting and other aesthetic improvements were linked to community organization goals in Hudson and other districts



A block party in East Harlem

formal start of the Conservation Program in Chelsea and Morningside, these districts have moved fairly rapidly to block organizations and the formation of neighborhood councils. In the former, block organizations have been formed on each of the district's eight blocks. Meeting at least once a month, they have concerned themselves with a variety of problems and projects. Typically, residents have discussed adverse housing and social conditions in specific buildings, and recommended various actions to overcome adverse situations. They have cooperated in campaigns such as the previously cited cleanup effort and worked closely with the district's organization of building superintendents, a group of janitors which has done much to uncover and then correct pernicious housing conditions.³

The overall council has had a wider range of interests. It took the lead, for instance, in supporting the development of the previously mentioned school playground and the construction of a new junior high school to the south of the district. It involved the community in the area's health survey; developed a newsletter; formulated and executed plans for an international cultural festival designed to promote better intergroup relations; raised funds to carry out a beautification campaign; arranged meetings with rooming

house owners to acquaint them with the requirements of the newly-enacted sanitary facilities bill; and is acting as the voice of this section of Chelsea in connection with the long-range renewal plans being developed by the Community Renewal Program of the City Planning Commission.

A fairly strong community organization had been developed in Morningside in 1959-1960 to help defeat proposed redevelopment efforts. Local staff could not at first utilize this potential strength because of community fears that the Conservation Program would entail major clearance and mass relocation. To counter fears, the Program was publicized through leaflets and meetings and by building a mailing list of district residents, which was then used to keep residents abreast of the project's progress.⁴ After this had been accomplished, regular monthly meetings were scheduled to help involve residents in the project. At first attendance was low; it increased as the good faith of the project was demonstrated and the Morningside effort became better known through various action programs. By the third meeting, interest and involvement were such that chairmen were chosen for each of the area's four blocks and two large buildings. Subsequently, the Morningside Neighborhood Conservation Council was started and began to act in concert with staff on prob-

lems which were of concern to the entire district. As an example, the Council arranged a meeting devoted to community safety, which was addressed by police officials and resulted in greater police protection. Conservation workshops, other forums and action programs have been developed by the organization. Currently, staff is giving detailed training to residents in every phase of the Program's activities, this in anticipation of the transition to resident-directed Neighborhood Conservation.⁵

Bloomingdale rejected the geographical base for community organization because of the strength and maturity of its volunteer efforts, in which over 200 volunteers were actively engaged at some points in the district's history. Their presence raised the question of how this large, though loose-knit group could be structured to provide the vehicle for resident-directed Conservation. After study and evaluation, it was decided that the volunteers could properly serve as the base for a permanent, neighborhood-wide organization. To make certain that it was representative, tenant leaders from both low and middle-income structures were invited to participate in the formation of the organization, which was achieved in March, 1961 through the creation of the Bloomingdale Conservation Association. After choosing officials, sub-committees were formed to deal with housing, recreation, inter-group relations, education, neighborhood beautification and fund-raising problems. Given office space and materials by the Conservation Program, the sub-committees began to function on problems and projects germane to them, sometimes in a way that was not always in keeping

with staff's perception of the aims and methods of Conservation. As a whole, the Association began to "maintain and improve Conservation goals" by being represented on the steering committee of the project, though at periods it has been dormant and has needed restructuring and revitalization from time to time. More recently, organizational efforts have been related to individuals concerned with the redevelopment of Riverside Park; it is hoped that the strengths developed in this project can be redirected to the Association, which has a wider focus. As in Chelsea and Morningside, a pattern seems to be emerging in Bloomingdale where the future direction of Conservation will be shared by sponsors and residents through representation on the steering committee, and direct involvement in the Program's work will come through subcommittees organized around the Conservation's functional aspects.

Community organization in the district shows both strengths and weaknesses.⁶ It is clear that residents of "grey" areas can be motivated to join building, block and neighborhood organizations, and through them, begin to work on problems and projects of interest and concern to the areas involved. Whether or not these activities can be sustained over a long period of time has not been established. Whether or not these organizations will emerge as truly representative bodies is debatable, as is the paramount question of whether or not they will develop the depth that is needed to guide the areas after they have been "conserved" and professional staff deployed elsewhere. This will be the acid test of, and occasion another report on Neighborhood Conservation in New York City.

FOOTNOTES

¹ The purpose of the training project was at first misunderstood or distorted by New Yorkers, as expressed in the press. The NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, for instance, depicted the program as "A Squalor Course." The NEW YORK TIMES was "dismayed" by the project, stating in an editorial that the Corpsmen "will get the same exposure to (Columbian) slums in the world's richest city." Another paper also believed that New York City was chosen because it could best simulate the slum conditions which the trainees would face in South America. One cartoon depicted a trainee surrounded by stereotyped juvenile delinquents who would "p'ertech Ya While Ya Get On Th' Job Training Fer Your Overseas Caper." None of the papers seemed to want to accept the fact, as stated by the Director of Training of the Peace Corps, that New York City was chosen not because it had the worst slums but simply because it had the best facilities and programs for training the group.

After their encounter with the Corpsmen, New Yorkers changed, again as expressed in the press. For instance, a reporter for THE WORLD TELEGRAM AND SUN, who had at first been extremely critical of the venture, later wrote that "I went into the slums (sic) of Chelsea with a group of Peace Corps volunteers and came out amazed by their perception . . . they gave every indication they will prove a good risk for Uncle Sam . . . they began to learn how to get inside people's minds as well as inside their homes."

² These generalizations also appear to be valid for volunteers who were assigned by Associated Community Teams to Morningside and Hamilton-

Grange and others who have participated in this aspect of the Program. In any event, the experience has allowed the Program to describe 55 different work tasks which volunteers can perform on a neighborhood basis and to ask for the permanent assignment of 500 VISTA volunteers, as provided in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

³ For a detailed discussion of the difficulties involved in starting a block organization—especially in linking low and middle-income residents into an effective partnership—see COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION, a report of the Social Work Recruiting Committee, which details efforts on one block in Chelsea.

⁴ Funds donated by the Rosensohn family allowed Morningside to employ a community organizer in the fall of 1961. This gave a decided forward thrust to its community organization efforts.

⁵ In Chelsea and Morningside, members of the block organizations began to serve on newly-created steering committees in the late spring of 1963. As a result, the single sponsors of these districts are now informally sharing responsibility and power with residents.

⁶ Carnegie Hill, East Harlem, Hudson and Hamilton-Grange have been grappling with problems attendant upon building organization and are just now giving thought and expression to block and community organizations. Of the four, Carnegie Hill is the most advanced. Its grouping, the Carnegie Hill Neighborhood Council, was triggered by the redevelopment plans of Mt. Sinai Hospital, and the failure of the Program to bring about major housing improvements. Active in a variety of projects, the Council is beginning to interact with the district's Board of Directors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to cite our appreciation for the work performed by various agencies, organizations, groups and institutions cooperating in the project.

Initiating, directing and sustaining Conservation has been the primary responsibility of the private sponsors of the seven districts. Without them, the program simply would not have existed. We therefore mark our debt to: Hudson Guild Neighborhood House, (Chelsea); Master Institute of United Arts, Grosvenor Neighborhood House, United Neighborhood Houses and the members of the steering committee of the Bloomingdale Conservation Project, (Bloomingdale); the Community Service Society, (East Harlem); Mt. Sinai Hospital, the Church of the Heavenly Rest, St. Francis deSales Roman Catholic Church and the members of the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Hill Neighborhood Conservation Project, (Carnegie Hill); the Morningside Community Center, (Morningside); the members of the steering committee of the Hudson Conservation Project, (Hudson); and City College, Manhattanville Community Center and neighborhood residents, (Hamilton-Grange).

No program is possible without funds. A debt far beyond the financial assistance rendered is owed to the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency, The City of New York and the following foundations or institutions: the Lavenburg Foundation, the Nathaniel Hoffheimer Foundation, the Master Institute of United Arts, the New York Foundation, the Community Service Society, the Taconic Foundation, the J.M. Kaplan Fund, the Field Foundation, Morningside Heights, Inc., the Estate of Florina Lasker, the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, the Frederick W. Richmond Foundation, the Audrey and Thomas Hess Foundation and the Thomas B. Wyman Foundation. Additional and most generous funds have been forthcoming from residents of the

districts, especially in Carnegie Hill, Bloomingdale, Hudson and Chelsea.

Code enforcement has been the province of personnel of the Departments of Buildings, Health, Fire, Sanitation and Water Supply Gas and Electricity. They have accomplished their missions in a remarkable fashion and have been assisted in compliance efforts by officials of the Penalties Division of the Office of the Corporation Counsel, the New York City Rent and Rehabilitation Administration and the Department of Welfare. There is not enough space to list the names of property owners who cooperated in this aspect of our work. The names of those who did not are properly enshrined in the records of the Criminal Court.

Success registered in the Program's relocation efforts can be ascribed to the work of personnel of the Department of Relocation, the New York City Housing Authority, the Department of Welfare, the Civil Court, and, especially in Bloomingdale, neighborhood volunteers.

Upgrading buildings beyond code compliance has been the most significant contribution made by property owners to the Program. They have been assisted in this process by personnel of Brown, Harris, Stevens, Inc.; the Home Finance Agency, the Housing Authority, the Department of Real Estate and other divisions of the Housing and Redevelopment Board, as well as a number of private financial institutions, particularly the General Theological Seminary in Chelsea.

Improving the general physical environment of Conservation Districts has been the joint task of the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, the Sanitation Department, the Manhattan Borough President's Office, the Department of Highways, the Parks Department, the Department of Air Pollution Control, the Department of Traffic, the Board of Education, the Department of

City Planning, property owners, volunteers and residents of the seven neighborhoods, to whom we are deeply grateful.

Improvements in the security of Conservation Districts have come about through the activities of the men and officers of cooperating precincts of the Police Department of the City of New York. Valuable assistance in this direction have come from its specialized units, such as the vice and narcotics squads and the Juvenile Aid Bureau. District residents and the New York City Youth Board have helped in this process. The New York City Commission on Human Rights, the Office of Migration of the Department of Labor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and a number of civil rights agencies have done much to foster improved intergroup relations in the districts.

The work of the local health Centers of the Department of Health has been exemplary, as has been that of staff and students of the Graduate Public Health Nursing Program of New York University and the Manhattan After-Care Division of the State Department of Mental Hygiene. The same may be said of the administrators, principals, teachers and staff of the public and private schools in Conservation Districts; officials of the Board of Education; and members of local Parent-Teachers Associations. Social welfare problems in the districts have received the special attention of local Welfare Centers. It has also been the province of such private agencies as the Community Service Society, Catholic Charities, St. Vincent's Hospital, the Salvation Army, Hudson Guild, Union Settlement, La Guardia Neighborhood House, and the voluntary agencies represented on the East Harlem Council for Community Planning. We are deeply in debt to them and the myriad number of private health and welfare agencies who accepted referrals from Conservation staff.

A special effort has been made to improve parks, playgrounds and other recreational facilities in the "grey" neighborhoods undergoing Conservation treatment. Much of this challenge has fallen on the Department of Parks, which has discharged its responsibilities in an admirable manner. This has been especially true in Bloomingdale where the Department was given invaluable aid and assistance by the Benjamin Rosenthal Foundation, the Heckscher Foundation, the Children's Aid Society, the West Side Day Nursery, the Bloomingdale Parents Association, the Department of Health, the Board of Education and the New York City Housing Authority. The Police Athletic League, Goddard-Riverside Community Center, Washington House Community Center, the Junior League, Casita Maria and the New York Herald Tribune Fresh Air Fund have played important recreational roles in other neighborhoods.

Valuable assistance in consumer education projects have come from the Department of Health, the Department of Markets, which is also true of the employment activities of Job Orientation In Neighborhoods, the New York State and City Departments of Labor, the Board of Education and a score of related public and private agencies.

Volunteers have also played an important part in the work of the Districts. This has been particularly true of individuals who have rendered services in Carnegie Hill, Chelsea, Hamilton-Grange and organized volunteer efforts such as the Bloomingdale Conservation Association and the Morningside Summer Work Shop. Their work has done much to make the entire Conservation effort more effective and humane, which is also true of the contingents of Peace Corpsmen who worked in the districts. Of the latter, we are deeply grateful to the Peace Corps and the New York School of

Social Work, who made their assignments possible and productive.

Our deepest gratitude goes to the residents of the Conservation Districts. Whether organized in formal block organizations and associations, or moving towards such structures, their efforts have made the reclamation of the districts possible.

Over-all, the Program has received valuable aid and assistance from the New York Regional Office of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, the Tax Department, the Bureau of the Budget, the Office of the Comptroller, the Civil Service Commission, the City Planning Commission, the Interdepartmental Committee on Housing Legislation, the Office of the City Administrator and the Housing Policy Committee. We are grateful for the help given by the personnel of these agencies; the Office of the Mayor, the Office of the Deputy Mayor and the Mayor's staff.

None of the neighborhood improvements in this report could have been accomplished without the full support and collaboration of other divisions of our parent body, the Housing and Redevelopment Board. In particular we would like to commend the aid and direction rendered by former members of the Board: the Hon. Robert C. Weaver, now Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development; J. Clarence Davies, Earl Brown, the Hon. Milton Mollen, now a Judge of the Criminal Court, whose direction, advice, vision and friendship, both as General Counsel and Chairman, was of inestimable value to the program; and the Hon. Herbert B. Evans, now a Judge of the Civil Court.

The Neighborhood Conservation Program would not have been possible without the dedication, creativity, resourcefulness, intelligence and plain hard work of the staff members.

A program should be known by its

turnover; Chelsea: Thomas Wolfe, Director, Goddard-Riverside Neighborhood House; John Erlich, Director, Operation Phoenix, West Side Urban Renewal Area; Anna Cruzado, Director, Consumer Education Project, United Neighborhood Houses; Nat Yallowitz, Social Worker, Mobilization for Youth; Bloomingdale: Juliet Brudney, Staff Coordinator, United Neighborhood Houses; East Harlem: Wilma Klein, Social Worker, Mobilization for Youth; Rita Ortiz, Social Worker, Mobilization for Youth; Frank Donnelly, Research Associate, Citizens' Committee for Children; Carnegie Hill: Magdalena Miranda, student, the New York School for Social Work; Gloria San Antonio, Assistant Director, Lower East Side Area Services Project; Morningside: Everett Reid, Director, East River Area Services Project; Geraldine Siegel, Director, Operation Janus, West Side Urban Renewal Area; Lillian Lee, Special Assistant, Office of the Coordinator of Special Services, the Department of Health of the City of New York; Hamilton-Grange: Clifford Alexander, Jr., Assistant to the Assistant for National Security Affairs, the Office of the President of the United States. Central Staff: Maximo Gonzalez, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Markets; Judah Gribetz, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Buildings; Victor Remer, Director, University Settlement House, Peggyann Murphy, City Planner, West Orange, New Jersey; D. John Heyman, Executive Assistant, the Rent and Rehabilitation Administration; Leon Schneider, Director, Rehabilitation Aids Division, the Housing and Redevelopment Board; Jules Cohn, Lecturer in Political Science, City College; Barbara Schwartzman, Research Associate, the Rent and Rehabilitation Administration; Hortense W. Gabel, Administrator, Rent and Rehabilitation Administration; Harry C. Harris, Vice President, Basic Systems, Incorporated.



